

**NEBRASKA TAXPAYERS FOR FREEDOM WORKSHEET:  
GOOD & BAD BILLS IN THE 2015 LEGISLATURE.**

**GOOD RESOLUTION.**

**LR 23: Riepe.** To win permission for NE veterans to use medical benefits at local clinics and hospitals, so that they will not have to travel long distances to a VA hospital. GOOD RESOLUTION/ PASSED

**BAD RESOLUTION.**

**LR 7CA: Schumacher.** To subvert legislative term limits by allowing senators to serve 2 6 yr. terms instead of two 4-yr. terms and allow senators to serve 3 4 yr. terms prior to waiting at least 4 yrs. to run again. Ernie Chambers supported the resolution. Senators who cannot learn the workings of the legislature in 8 yrs. probably should not serve. NE voters have voted 4 times for current term limits, by 65% in 2012. BAD RESOLUTION/ KILLED

**GOOD BILLS.**

**LB 15: Krist.** To require that attorneys who serve as guardians ad litem follow specific state supreme court guidelines regarding attending every hearing, conduct consultations every 3 months with clients, limit their caseloads, and prepare and submit written reports and itemized billing statements to the court and subdivision that contracts for their services. Douglas County and other counties have suffered problems with overbilling and lack of contracted supervision of juveniles by guardians ad litem. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 31: Bloomfield.** To eliminate requirement for motorcycle and moped helmets for riders and their passengers for adults 21 or older. Eye protection still required for every rider. NE loses millions in tourism revenue annually from bikers and rallies that avoid our state, and the law infringes on deserved personal choice. Helmets give riders a false sense of security, block hearing, and block peripheral vision that can spot vehicles. Education about safety and awareness is sufficient. GOOD BILL/KILLED

**LB 41: Nordquist.** To increase from 200,000 to 250,000 the population size for counties that participate in the County Employees Retirement System, so that Sarpy County can participate. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 45: Coash.** A nonresident owner of a film vehicle may operate such vehicle for up to one year without registering the vehicle in this state, an incentive to draw film companies to NE. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 52: Scheer.** To exempt sanitary drainage districts from sales and use taxes. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 56: Scheer.** To give Northeast Community College first right of refusal to buy the former Norfolk regional center site. The sale would base on the appraised value of the property. The state needed to do something with this decaying property and to avoid potential liability issues. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 67: Schumacher.** To create a legal lien on government bonds in order to ensure bondholder priority in bankruptcy proceedings. The present uncertainty in bankruptcy priorities limits financing options for smaller towns and increases the cost of issuing bonds. NE communities depend upon municipal bonds to finance many projects. Pension funds and retirement accounts are exempt from this law. GOOD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 72: Schumacher.** To increase the money that the state recovers from estates to defray Medicaid expenses. Individuals try to transfer assets to heirs in order to avoid the reach of state Medicaid reimbursement mechanisms upon death. The state now garners about \$4 million annually, taxpayers subsidizing the difference. A state study found that NE could recover \$10+ million annually. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 95: Smith.** To add motorized 2 or 3-wheeled bikes reaching a speed of 20 mph to the NE definition of bicycle. Current law erroneously classifies them as vehicles, subjecting owners to licensing and helmet restrictions. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 99: Sullivan.** To eliminate a progress report duty for the Education Comm. of the Legislature regarding post-secondary education. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 104: Krist.** With customer permission, to allow electronic notice of discontinuance of utility service, cheaper than by mail or in person. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 118: Larson.** To allow cigar and pipe smoking in cigar shops and tobacco outlets. Such establishments could apply for liquor licenses, if they do not sell food, generate at least 10% of gross revenue from sales of cigars and tobacco products, and do not allow cigarette smoking. Currently, cigar bars cannot compete with online cigar vendors. Cigar bars are legal in 47 states. They represent important small businesses that serve clientele well. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 126: Nordquist.** To increase the population size for counties allowed to create individual county retirement plans. Minimum county population size increases to 250,000 from 200,000, and maximum population size increases from 300,000 to 500,000. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 129: Harr.** To require a national criminal background check for applicants for initial licenses to practice as a registered or licensed practical nurse. 34 states require such checks. The NE Board of Nursing supported the bill. GOOD

BILL/ PASSED

**LB 132: Ebke.** To require joint public agencies to follow bond issuance procedures now required by law for the participating public agency from which the JPA derives taxing authority. JPAs now can issue bonds paid by a property tax without public hearings or votes, which this bill rectified. JPAs now have more bonding power than the entities that created them. The bill permits refinancing of existing bonds, if there is no increase in the principal amount and no extension of the final maturity date of indebtedness. The entire electorate would vote on a bond issue, if participating public agencies have overlapping geographic jurisdictions. The liberal League of NE Municipalities opposed the bill. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 146: Crawford.** To allow crematoriums and funeral homes after determination of eligibility and no other claims to give control of unclaimed remains to veteran service organizations, which after 1 yr. can provide a proper burial in a veteran cemetery. Our veterans deserve a dignified burial. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 155: Williams.** To remove several state regulations from state-chartered banks. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 160: Larson.** To allow federal and state-chartered financial institutions to offer gift promotions as rewards or in contests for deposits. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 177: Haar.** To prohibit full-time or part-time employed high-level managers of a public power district from serving as a member of the board of directors of a public power district, which creates conflicts of interest. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 181: Smith.** To allow utility vehicles to use blue and amber rotating and flashing lights, a safety feature, when operating near or on highways. GOOD BILL/PASSED

**LB 183: Johnson.** Grain transportation vehicles no longer must become registered and issued grain dealer plates. Accounting firms preparing statements for grain dealership license plates may be located in any state. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 190: Bloomfield.** To allow legal aliens and military spouses of those stationed here to apply for concealed handgun permits. GOOD BILL/ KILLED

**LB 219: Crawford.** To provide a legal framework for parents and judges regarding care for kids when a divorced military parent deploys and returns and create temporary custodial agreements. The bill will minimize the amount of disruption in a young life when a military parent with custodial responsibility deploys. It clarifies options available to military parents having custody disputes. The bill will help kids stay in contact with deployed parents and extended family members. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 220: Smith.** To authorize special license plates to celebrate our state 150th anniversary in 2017. A \$70 application and renewal fee will apply. This money will help fund our statehood celebrations. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 252: Schumacher.** To permit issuers of securities registering by coordination to file only 1 copy of a prospectus instead of 3, saving issuers copying costs. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 259: Gloor.** To cut personal property tax bills for farmers and businesses about 9%, or an average of \$162, an exemption from taxes on the first \$10,000 of value of property like farm equipment and business computers. This tax relief specifically will help new businesses financing purchases of equipment. NE is one of few states that taxes ag personal property. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 264: Morfeld.** Requires state health dept. to count specific education, training, and service in the U.S. armed forces towards health profession credentials. The bill will help alleviate veteran unemployment. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 265: Campbell.** To allow judges access to juvenile sealed records when determining transferring a case to or from juvenile court. Vicious juveniles should be tried in adult court. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 269: Hughes.** To eliminate a bureaucratic requirement to prepare and distribute biennially a roster of all registered abstracters. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 286: Craighead.** To allow state banks, savings and loan associations, and credit unions the same authority as federal equivalents. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 294: Scheer.** A sex trafficking victim or a parent or legal guardian who suffered or continues to suffer personal or psychological injury as a result of such trafficking can sue in civil court under a pseudonym anyone who knowingly trafficked him or her or anyone who assisted with the trafficking within NE and win attorneys fees. Anyone who knowingly engages in sex trafficking or labor trafficking will face a Class IIIA felony. Pimps can face 50 yrs. in jail. Anyone who solicits sex from a juvenile could face a maximum 20 yr. sentence, up from 5 yrs. Prosecutors will have subpoena and search warrant authority outside NE. Law officers can confiscate financial and property assets of traffickers to help pay for victim counseling services. Forfeited assets will go to a victim assistance fund. The NE Criminal Defense Attorneys Assoc. opposed the bill. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 296: Kolterman.** To require the HHS dept. to provide parental notification to parents of child siblings after removing a child from a home. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 301: Chambers.** To authorize the state supreme court to distribute judicial reports and decisions in electronic format,

as requests for hard copy subscriptions have declined precipitously. This bill saves money for recipients of these services. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 305: Schnoor.** To allow veteran aid funds to pay local transportation costs for veterans, adding to the list of funeral expenses provided by the director of veterans affairs. A vet must have served on active duty and won discharge under honorable or general discharge and died while in or as a direct result of service. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 317: Kintner.** To end NE participation in the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact, a heavily taxpayer-subsidized rail system through the Midwest. NE already has wasted \$197,650 in membership dues over 14 yrs. NE can coordinate with adjacent states on rail issues. Such subsidization would not generate riders in NE, and the state has too few people to sustain passenger rail service envisioned by the compact. Effective bill date, however, is not until 7-1-2018, costing taxpayers an additional \$30,000. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 324: McCollister.** To permit SIDs to contract for solid waste disposal. To require anyone buying a home in an SID to acknowledge in writing that they are not eligible to vote in adjacent municipal elections. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 329: Schilz.** Rural landowners who allow tourists on their property for agri-tourism activities would not be legally liable for injury or death resulting from inherent risk or negligence. Examples are boating, hunting, fishing and camping. Landowners must warn visitors of potential dangers by a sign or contract if charging a fee. Threat of potential lawsuits and high insurance costs prevent many landowners from opening their properties to tourists. Owners would be liable for actions that constitute willful or intentional gross negligence. The bill will promote rural tourism. The NE Assoc. of Trial Attorneys opposed the bill. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 348: Krist.** To eliminate unnecessary government regulation of specific financial services transactions and allow the free market to govern, so that credit unions can market ATMs. Specifically, the bill removes regulation by the Department of Banking of point of sale interchange between merchants and financial institutions and switch fees set by networks for both point of sale and automatic teller machine transactions. The bill further removes regulation of ATMs. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 365: Baker.** To allow school districts and educational service units to retain books, papers, documents, reports, records and meeting minutes as electronic records. It is easier to retrieve data electronically. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 367: Groene.** To allow payment to petition circulators based on number of signatures. The current ban has caused the cost of petition drives to skyrocket, making it almost impossible for aggrieved citizens to exercise constitutional petition rights of free speech. Now, petitioners must spend up to \$1 million to successfully place an issue on the ballot. The NE petition process now is available only to millionaires and unions, witness the minimum wage petition. When circulators receive pay by the hour, the cost rises, because productivity decreases. Reform is especially necessary with a 1-house legislature. The liberal League of NE Municipalities opposed the bill. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 375: Craighead.** To allow a broker price opinion or a comparative market analysis for real property tax appeals. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 382: Cook.** To provide \$400,000 in grants to non-school entities that offer a qualified high school equivalency training program, so that youth can gain basic educational skills, have greater employment opportunities, and earn higher salaries. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 390: Crawford.** To prohibit additional compounds of synthetic marijuana, like K2. Section 3 makes possession of substances containing synthetic cannabinoids, such as K2, a Class IV felony rather than an infraction. Section 3 also creates crimes for possessing and making edible products containing THC and/or marijuana. Possession of such edible product is a Class IV felony, and manufacture of such edible product is a Class III felony. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 408: Kolterman.** To drop a felony charge to a Class IV misdemeanor, if the amount of corporate tax due for non-payment of property taxes is less than \$1,000. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 413: Mello.** To authorize the Dept. of Environmental Quality to exercise all possible discretion allowed by the EPA to allow political subdivisions requesting a permit to comply with the standards of the federal law, while remaining financially sustainable. The department, at the request of a political subdivision, will conduct an evaluation to determine the extent to which such subdivision must comply with the permit while considering financial capability, ratepayer affordability, infrastructure growth projections, and overall costs and benefits. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 469: Smith.** Citizens have a right to know how EPA carbon dioxide regulations impact our state economy and to consider alternatives. The state environment dept. will prepare a report analyzing how state energy plans affect employment, commercial and retail electricity prices, risks to electricity generation, and necessary investment to offset changes in energy production. A public hearing mandated. The state energy dept. will make recommendations to the Governor and legislature to facilitate energy infrastructure planning and development. The plan will focus on strategies to develop a cost-competitive energy supply, sustainable economic growth, and job creation. A state plan to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from electrical plants least restrictive in nature, factoring in cost/benefit ratio to customers and economic development. The leftist Sierra Club opposed the bill. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 479: Bloomfield.** To allow counties and cities to erect monuments, memorials, or statues to honor armed services

members in any American conflict. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 480: Harr.** To deny worker compensation to those who knowingly and willfully make false statements about their physical or medical condition to gain employment, and if employer relied on such falsehood and the reliance was a substantial factor in the hiring and that there is a causal connection between the false statement and injury. To expand the authority to invest trust assets held in irrevocable workers compensation trusts to allow for investments in the same manner as corporate trustees holding retirement or pension funds for government employees. If the assets fall below the acceptable amount required by the compensation court, the trustor must deposit additional assets to continue to satisfy the minimum security amounts required. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 504: Krist.** A court may, upon application by the prosecution, order that contact information for victims or witnesses named in a presentence report be redacted upon showing by a preponderance of evidence that the redaction is in the interests of public safety. This legislation protects victims and witnesses. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 513: Craighead.** A school board that determines that school district property or portion thereof is not currently needed for use but may be needed in future can lease such property, thus earning revenue. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 538: Watermeier.** To create an ongoing evaluation process for all present and future tax incentive programs used to recruit and retain businesses in NE. Each program will undergo a performance audit at least once every 3 yrs., examining program goals, economic and fiscal impacts, impacts on local governments, and meeting legislative goals, with recommendations for changes to procedures that will allow easier evaluations in future. It is crucial to conduct a wider analysis to ensure that the incentives are attracting jobs and businesses that NE needs. Currently, there is no means to evaluate if tax incentives have succeeded in attracting and retaining businesses. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 539: Watermeier.** To allow the state auditor to issue subpoenas to compel attendance of witnesses and production of documents, accounts, and testimony, and depose witnesses in and outside NE as with civil actions in district court. If one ignores a subpoena or refuses to testify, the Lancaster county district court can compel testimony through contempt proceedings. This action is necessary to discover possible wrongdoing by state and local government entities and in interlocal agreements. When the state auditor requests in writing access to information or records, a state agency must provide that office within 3 business days the requested materials, or, if there is legal basis for refusal to comply, a written denial with legal reason. For extensive requests, a 3-week limit. If the entire request cannot reasonably be complied with within 3 business days, a written explanation is necessary. To allow the auditor to examine books, accounts, records, and expenditures of service contractors who receive state or federal funds. The auditor can audit TIF projects. A Class II misdemeanor for willful failure to comply. Prohibits and penalizes retaliation against government subdivision employees who provide materials and information to State Auditor. Such managers or supervisors will face a Class III misdemeanor and firing. The state must monitor service providers more closely. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 561: Stinner.** To allow irrigation districts to conduct elections by mail. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 575: Murante.** To allow registered voters to use electronic mail to request an early ballot. To allow elections by mail for special elections. To prohibit candidates from holding nominations from more than 1 political party, which gives them an unfair advantage. Allow poll workers to volunteer without pay. To allow election commissioners to run for office 30 days after leaving office, instead of 6 mo. Vacancies for all offices must become filled within 45 days. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 577: Murante.** To allow counties to register and regulate the conduct of peddlers within a county on public or private property and who harass residential owners by their aggressive conduct. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 591: Bolz.** To permit families of and those with disabilities developed before 26 to place up to \$14,000 annually in a tax-exempt savings account. They can use this money to pay for costs of housing, job training, continuing education, and specialized medical equipment beyond what SS provides. The bill will offer incentives to parents to plan for children security when no longer able to provide for them. No cost to the General Fund. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 599: Ebke.** To allow employers to pay \$8 per hour, for up to 25 hours, to employees 18 or younger who are students in public or private schools and have no dependent children. This bill would protect small businesses, especially grocers in small towns who have a difficult time paying the minimum wage to entry-level teens because of the amount of time necessary to train them. When small rural shops fail, unemployment rises, and many must drive long distances for groceries and other necessities. Making young employees more affordable will result in additional job opportunities. First jobs are critical to long-term earning potential, early experience resulting in 7% higher yearly wages later, according to studies. The teachers union and state AFL-CIO opposed the bill and lobbied heavily to kill it. GOOD BILL/ KILLED

**LB 642: Smith.** To eliminate additional \$5 fee for Pearl Harbor and disabled veteran license plates. GOOD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 649: Kintner.** To require all votes for Speaker and legislative committee chairmanships to be publicly recorded votes. Citizens have the right to transparency, to know who senators support for these leadership positions as they know how senators vote on bills and resolutions. The liberal League of NE Municipalities opposed this bill. GOOD BILL/ GENERAL FILE

## **BAD BILLS.**

**LB 18: Krist.** To force every student to get a meningitis shot at 7th Grade and at 16, though the low number of NE cases of meningitis does not warrant a mandatory vaccination program. There exists no public health risk. The NSEA endorsed this bill. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 18A: Krist.** Funding for LB 18 would total \$253,917 plus \$15,750. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 34: Howard.** All homes built, renovated, or sold after 1-1-2017 and rentals that have a fuel-fired heater or appliance, a fireplace, or an attached garage must have a carbon monoxide alarm installed and maintained on each floor in locations specified by state or local building codes. Another state government mandate. People normally are intelligent enough to buy these devices on their own. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 70: Schumacher.** In addition to current occupation taxes imposed on mechanical amusement devices like game lotteries, the state may levy another occupation tax on businesses operating a mechanical amusement device that accepts money and awards monetary prizes. The amount of tax will equal 10% of the gross revenue derived from the operation of the device. \$75 fine for each violation. Levying this double tax is not an equitable means to control expanded gambling. BAD BILL/ PASSED/ VETOED

**LB 70A: Schumacher.** To fund LB 70, \$97,921 in the first fiscal year, \$10,000 in the 2nd fiscal year, and \$50,000 annually ongoing. BAD BILL/ PASSED/VETOED

**LB 77: Nordquist.** To require the state welfare dept. to submit a state plan to the federal government to provide medical aid for family planning services to individuals with a family income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, about \$36,000 for a family of 3. The cost: \$6.8 million annually. This legislation could increase unplanned pregnancies by causing women to believe that they are insured against pregnancy risks. Most of this funding would go to Planned Parenthood, which promotes abortions and sale of fetal body parts. Federal studies of similar programs in other states prove no decrease in accidental pregnancies. Leftist NE Appleseed supported the bill. BAD BILL/ GENERAL FILE

**LB 81: Cook.** To expand eligibility for child care welfare assistance to about 2,000 families. At redetermination of eligibility, if a family income exceeds 130% of the federal poverty level, a family can receive transitional child care aid for up to 24 consecutive months or until the family income exceeds 185% of the fed poverty level. If the family income falls to 140% of the fed poverty level or below, the 24 mo. time limit will not apply until a family becomes eligible for transitional child care aid. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 81A: Cook.** \$1.5 million over 2 fiscal years to fund LB 81. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 85: Davis.** To increase the maximum cattle brand inspection fee per head from 75c to \$1.10 for 7,000+ NE brand owners. The bill will add costs to large feedlots, meat processors, and eventually consumers. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 88: Campbell.** To raise the county marriage license fee from \$15 to \$25. The fee for making a certified copy of a marriage license will increase from \$5 to \$9. These increases are excessive. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 89: Campbell.** To raise ADC payments by \$72 per month, increasing with inflation every 2 yrs. The bill increases the amount of gross earned income disregarded for applicants to 50%. To create an Intergenerational Poverty Task Force to share, examine, and analyze data and information regarding poverty in NE, with a primary focus on information about kids at risk of continuing the cycle of poverty without outside intervention, and to develop effective plans, programs, and recommendations to help kids escape the poverty cycle, another welfare expansion. The leftist Appleseed Center endorsed the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 89A: Campbell.** Appropriations of \$8.3 million for each of the next 2 fiscal years; \$12.1 million by FYs 2018 and 2019. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 106: Watermeier.** To allow the ag. dept. to create a template for county officials to determine approval or rejection of an application for a livestock operation, dairy, or hog confinement site permit. Criteria include size and type of operation, proximity to residences and parks, landscaping, traffic, manure storage, and odor control. Applicants must win approval from either a county planning commission or county board of commissioners. County boards could use or not use these state guidelines in considering approval of large livestock operations like feedlots and dairies. The bill allows appeals of zoning board decisions to a mediator before going to court. Denied applicants can appeal a decision to the district court. This bill will give local governments insufficient authority to deny permits and decide on land use and planning, individual local interests and needs not met. Local counties already have authority to zone for roads, factories, businesses, and homes. Opponents fear that the bill will eliminate independent livestock producers, concentrate livestock production, and give too much power to the ag. dept. director. The bill creates a new, bureaucratic 7-member review board. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 142: Schilz.** To impose a \$5-\$10 fee every 3 yrs. on boat registrations to fund monitoring and sampling of NE waters for aquatic invasive species and conduct eradication projects. Boats registered outside NE must buy an annual stamp for \$10-\$15. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 142A: Schilz.** To appropriate \$487,191 in FY 2015-16 and \$487,191 in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 142. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 152: Urban Affairs Comm.** To allow cities by resolution or ordinance to borrow from banks, building and loan associations, and savings & loan associations. Such money would become earmarked to buy property or construct improvements. The bill caps the amount of indebtedness from direct borrowing at 10% of the municipal budget of a city or 20% of a village budget. The leftist League of NE Municipalities supported the bill. Voters would not necessarily understand the uses for this money, another means to spend money without voter approval. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 168: Mello.** To allow city councils to expand business improvement districts that tax all businesses within a district, notwithstanding objections of businesses within the proposed boundaries. The bill also allows creation of new business improvement districts. The leftist League of NE Municipalities supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 173: Chambers.** To eliminate several mandatory minimum habitual felony prison sentence penalties of up to 50 yrs. for drug dealers, child pornographers, those committing sexual assaults on children, armed robbers, and those using firearms in drive-by shootings, thus loosing more violent criminals into society and increasing gang violence. Only those convicted of 3 instead of 1 of 3 violent crimes like murder or rape would be considered a habitual criminal. Such inmates thus could earlier earn good time for release, like Nikko Jenkins, who murdered 4 people. Repeat felony offenders often vary the kinds of crimes committed, easily accommodating bill provisions. Prosecutors would be unable to ensure that habitual criminals remain jailed for significant periods, no matter how many repeat convictions for attempted murder, rape, and child abuse resulting in death. Additional expenses would accrue for probation supervision and electronic monitoring. The ACLU, NE Criminal Defense Attorneys Assoc., and Platte Institute support the bill, the latter redefining habitual criminal to reduce sentences for felons. Gov. Ricketts, Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, and many county prosecutors oppose the bill as counterproductive to efforts to quash violent gang crime. Mandatory minimum sentences reduce the state crime rate each year, ensure that felons receive equal sentences, and make them ineligible for good time that can cut sentences by 50%. Conservative senators passed the original mandatory minimum law to quash gangs and gun crimes in Omaha, to guarantee that different courts issue like sentences. Mandatory minimums guarantee that criminals convicted of dangerous crimes cannot win probation. The 3-strikes law offers prosecutors a means to jail career criminals for up to 60 years. This bill would save little tax money, do little to relieve prison overcrowding, and provide earlier release dates of 2.3 years. It is a negative way to solve prison overcrowding. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 175: Schilz.** To allow community gardens operated by cooperatives use of hydrants to supply water and to provide water service at reduced rates, unfair to other residents BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 176: Schilz.** To narrow the prohibition against packers owning and feeding hog livestock. This bill would cripple small, independent hog producers and allow national meatpackers to dictate pork prices. It would lead to the end of independent cattle producers also. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 199: Howard.** To require the welfare dept., working with accredited social work educational programs at NE colleges and universities, to establish a program to provide payments for undergrad and graduate students committed to work in the child welfare services field. The teachers union supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 199A: Howard.** To appropriate \$183,244 in FY 2015-16 and \$169,400 in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 199. BAD BILL/ PASSED.

**LB 240: Hansen.** To extend to 9-2017 and expand to several additional sites a pilot program offering behavioral health diagnoses and referrals, expanding another welfare program without calculating its effectiveness. This pilot program presently is inconclusive and fails to offer data proving worthiness to make it permanent. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 242: Stinner.** To increase the dry bean checkoff rate from 10c to 15c per 100 lbs. starting on 8-1-2015 and authorize adjusting the rate up to 24c. The bill repealed a provision that permitted dry bean producers to apply for a refund within 30 days of sale. Producers who disagree with the checkoff or its rate now have no means to dissent from the appointed board decision. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 243: Bolz.** To grant medical care for youth in extended guardianships and mandate extended medical aid services to foster care youth, another welfare expansion. The leftist NE Appleaseed Center supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 243A: Bolz.** To appropriate \$750,000 in General Funds in FY 2016 and FY 2017 and \$1.5 million in General Funds in FY 2018 and also in FY 2019 for the pilot project along with federal matching funds. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 245: Pansing Brooks.** To allow a motion for a new trial after discovery of new non-DNA evidence after more than 3 yrs. after verdict date or testing on evidence not previously tested for DNA. Currently, convicts have 3 yrs. following a conviction to seek a new trial based on new, non-DNA evidence. This bill includes a 5 yr. time limit. Convicts also can ask for retesting if showing that DNA technology had improved greatly. The ACLU-NE supported the bill. This bill needlessly will clog courts with frivolous appeals and new trials. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 268: Chambers.** To replace the death penalty with life in prison *with possibility of parole*. The bill may apply retroactively to 11 killers on death row, several of them Chambers constituents like Nikko Jenkins, though constitutionally, only the State Pardons Board can commute a sentence. This was the 38th time that Chambers introduced this bill. Proponents do not consider the costs to survivors, such as loss of parents, paying for expenses like education, and loss of companionship. Costs for the death penalty are no higher than those for permanent incarceration,

and taxpayers should not pay \$50,000 annually to house and feed a violent killer, an amount higher than the average NE annual income. Violent inmates spared the death penalty are more prone to murder other inmates or prison guards, figuring they have nothing to lose. Repeal especially has placed law enforcement officers in increased danger, as criminals shooting at them will not fear the death penalty. The death penalty is a public safety mechanism, giving prosecutors a bargaining tool to keep dangerous, violent criminals out of society. BAD BILL/ PASSED/ VETOED

**LB 268 ov:** To override the gubernatorial veto of LB 268. VETO OVERRIDDEN

**LB 315: Howard.** To place bureaucratic burdens on private companies auditing and collecting overpayments from Medicaid providers in Obama Care. Limits the number of records that they can audit at one time. Allows payment for services or products provided, even if inappropriately billed. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 320: Bolz.** To establish 3 demonstration project resource centers for aging and disability centers to evaluate the feasibility of establishing such centers statewide, including public relations campaigns. They would offer help in accessing and applying for welfare programs. The leftist AARP supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 320A: Bolz.** To appropriate \$685,555 in FY 2015-16 and \$1.03 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 320. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 343: Kolowski.** To offer school districts funds for college and career readiness programs, though many school districts already offer these services. A district could receive up to 49% of total implementation costs through grants given through educational service units. To appropriate \$3 million in FY 2015-16, \$2 million in FY 2016-17, \$5 million in FY 2017-18, and \$7 million in FY 2018-19 to fund LB 343. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 360: Johnson.** To raise local pet license fees from \$1 to \$1.25 and raise annual fees for commercial dog and cat breeders plus a surtax on each animal owned. Implements a re-inspection fee of \$150. The state can conduct unannounced inspections of premises not licensed and that may not require licensing. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 366: Pansing Brooks.** A Medicaid expansion bill to increase the monthly personal needs allowance under Medicaid from \$50 to \$60 for people in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other group living sites. Actually, families can provide for relatives' personal needs. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 366A: Pansing Brooks.** To appropriate \$796,000 in FY 2015-16 and \$955,200 in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 366. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 414: Harr.** To exempt 32 nonprofit fraternal benefit societies from local property taxes. The bill allowed Woodmen of the World to blackmail our state by threatening to leave in order to avoid paying its \$1.2 million annual tax bill. Other insurance companies will request like treatment. Douglas County denied this business tax exemption twice. The bill will push more property tax burden onto other property owners. A state tax court has not yet ruled on the Woodmen tax appeal case. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 419: Mello.** To exempt 4 nationally-accredited NE zoos from collecting and paying state sales tax on admissions, memberships, and purchases, a \$2.6 million bonus. The Omaha zoo currently paid \$1.4 million to the state and \$385,000 to Omaha annually in sales tax. Such exemption will unfairly decrease the sales tax base, while museums and other nonprofit entities still will pay sales tax. Tourists from other states now enjoy a tax break, while Nebraskans have received no sales or property tax relief. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 423: Nordquist.** To give a wind or other renewable commercial energy project a .75c investment or tax credit for every kilowatt hour of power produced, decreasing until expiration in 5 years. A limit for a facility tax credit of \$1 million over 2 yrs. A total of \$75 million in credits annually. Only 6 other states offer these production tax credits, and NE still would not be competitive with other states in this category. NE wind farms ruin landscapes and earn noise complaints from neighbors. The sunset date on the entire legislation is 12-31-2021. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 448: Nordquist.** To alter teacher retirement contribution provisions that would give the teachers union, not school boards, final authority. The OPS teachers retirement fund is only 74% funded because of poor investment decisions, and its plan is more generous than those in other school districts, because retirees receive medical cost of living hikes and a state service annuity. This bill would force the state to cover shortages in the OPS plan, a bailout. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 448A: Nordquist.** To appropriate \$200,000 in FY 2015-16 and in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 448. BAD BILL/ SELECT FILE

**LB 449: Mello.** To require the NE Tourism Comm. to provide marketing aid grants to localities and organizations hosting tourist events in NE that could attract out of state visitors but only possibly generate favorable national or international media coverage for NE. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 468: Nordquist.** To assess a \$6 fee on each participant in adult and traffic pre-trial diversion programs and direct the funds to the judge retirement fund. Higher fees for this diversion will dissuade people from enrolling. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 494: Nordquist.** To establish a minimum wage for employees compensated by tips at \$3 per hour, raising the amount eventually to \$4.50 per hr. With tips, most restaurant waiters are the highest-paid employees there, making \$10-\$23 per

hour. Tipped workers need no increase, because federal law mandates that employers pay the difference, if a worker paycheck and tips fall below the regular minimum wage. Passage would cause service industries like restaurants operating on thin profit margins to raise their prices and increase pay disparity among employees or cut employee hours. Restaurants in small communities would fire workers because of low customer volume. The NE AFL-CIO supported the bill. BAD BILL/ KILLED

**LB 500: Howard.** To require the state welfare dept. to ask the federal welfare dept. for permission to provide state taxpayer money for multi-systemic behavioral health therapy and functional family therapy for juvenile delinquents and others eligible for Medicaid and subsidized insurance. This bill expanded Medicaid. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 500A: Howard.** To appropriate \$23,500 in FY 2015-16 and \$1.5 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 500. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 519: Sullivan.** To forgive additional teacher loan repayments for teachers teaching in poverty areas. To create and fund an unneeded innovative Expanded Learning Opportunity Grant program for school districts and ESUs. The bill funded by grants after school and out of school programs. Require the Education Committee to conduct a study of postsecondary education affordability. To create the Obama-inspired community college aid program to provide state funding to NE community colleges to offer financial aid to students in eligible programs. Applicants must come from families whose income is at or below 250% of federal poverty guidelines and be NE residents. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 519A: Sullivan.** To appropriate \$32.2 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 519. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 525: Sullivan.** Homeless students win admission without charge to school districts in which they reside or where last enrolled, adding to local property tax burdens. To expand eligibility for free and reduced-price school meals. All students in high poverty schools can eat free breakfasts and lunches without filling out eligibility applications. To expand the duties of the unneeded state school security director to include making recommendations on curricular and extracurricular materials to school districts regarding cyberbullying. To provide scholarship money to additional individuals whose annual family income is at or below 250% of the federal poverty level. To redefine poverty student to include more and to provide them with free transportation. To spend \$2 million in FY 2016-17, \$5 million in FY 2017-18, \$7 million in FY 2018-19, and \$10 million in FY 2019-20 for public schools and educational service units to offer relevant and rigorous college prep classes and career academies. Schools can apply for grant funding from the state education dept. to offset initial costs of implementation and up to 49% of total costs. To offer funding to school districts and ESUs that provide qualified distance education courses through the ESU Coordinating Council. Many of these objectives local school districts already handle. Require the Education Commissioner to appoint an unneeded Coordinator for Educator Effectiveness to support the development and implementation of an effective teacher system. To allow for appointment of another deputy commissioner of education. To decrease poverty allowances under the state school aid formula to allow easier access to welfare payments. The leftist NE Appleseed Center and teachers union supported this bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 525A: Sullivan.** To appropriate \$75,502 in FY 2015-16 and \$3.96 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 525. BAD BILL/ KILLED

**LB 547: Campbell.** To expand eligibility for additional early childhood education program grants partnered with school districts but forcing child care providers involved to submit to training by the Early Childhood Training Center, more government control. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 547A: Campbell.** To appropriate \$1,306,152 from federal funds for FY 2015-16 and \$1,741,536 from federal funds for FY 2016-17 to fund LB 547. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 581: Nordquist.** To require the state energy office to offer \$500,000 in rebates, \$2,500 to \$4,500 per vehicle, for converting vehicles to burn compressed natural gas or higher ethanol percentages, discriminating against other fuel operations and interfering in the free market. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 581A: Nordquist.** To appropriate \$500,000 to fund LB 581. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 598: Schumacher.** To use the least restrictive manner for isolating prison inmates and require a long-term plan for use and reduction of inmate segregation. Solitary confinement ended. The Governor must declare an overcrowding emergency when the prison director certifies that the prison population is over 140% of capacity and require the parole board to consider additional paroles. To require the prisons dept. to administer a mental health evaluation to all inmates within the first 2 weeks of their incarceration and re-evaluate them prior to release. To place mentally ill convicts in the least restrictive accommodation possible, increasing risks to prison staff and the public if escaping. The bill expands the definition of mental illness to create a large population of potential patients transferred to psychiatric facilities outside the prison, adding huge costs. To add another bureaucrat, an Inspector-Gen. of the NE prison system, to investigate prison employee conduct and convict death or serious injury. The ACLU-NE, Nebraskans for Peace, and OTOC supported this bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 598A: Schumacher.** To appropriate \$9.87 million in FY 2015-16 and in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 598. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 605: Mello.** A liberal prison reform plan to reduce prison populations that greatly increases county incarceration costs for inmate food and medical care. County jails will incur huge additional expenses from housing misdemeanor and less than 1-yr. sentenced prisoners now housed in state prisons, as the \$500,000 appropriated to cover these costs is inadequate. Counties will pay more to provide office space, equipment, and supplies for additional state probation officers, an unfunded mandate. Subsequent greater numbers of probation violations will result in more inmates, causing a county to pay for jailing inmates in adjacent counties. The infrastructure to follow inmates on probation is not in place yet. Douglas County could have 50 additional inmates daily. Sarpy Co. will face \$500,000-\$1.7 million in additional costs from housing or farming out prisoners who now serve sentences in state prisons, costs not wholly reimbursed by the state. This county board unanimously voted to oppose LB 605. A property tax increase likely. The NE County Attorneys Assoc. and the NE Att.-Gen. opposed the bill. Property offense amount thresholds will rise. Shorter sentences for violent and habitual criminals. 16 yr. original sentences will drop to 8 yr. sentences with parole. A rapist sentenced to 50 yrs. in prison could win parole in 7 1/2 yrs. Class III felonies will earn reduced sentences. Judges no longer will have discretion to impose harsher sentences. 176 dangerous felons with 3 strikes will walk free to victimize more people. The Parole Administration must develop administrative and custodial sanctions imposed instead of parole revocation. Some inmates are plainly evil; no rehabilitative programs can help them. Restitution required from criminals, who will not pay. Douglas County has reduced its jail population by using innovative methods, like mental health evaluations, which other counties can replicate to reduce their costs, a good substitute for this bill. Crime rates have fallen in NE because of mandatory minimum sentences for gun and sex crimes, keeping violent repeat offenders jailed. OTOC and the ACLU, always concerned about prisoner complaints but not public safety, supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 605A: Mello.** To appropriate \$4.7 million in FY 2015-16 and \$15.4 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 605. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 607: Mello.** To increase the maximum amount of ADC standard of need to 55%. Bill increased the amount of gross earned income disregarded for ADC to 50%. ADC payments will increase by an average of \$72 monthly for 2 yrs., then increase in future years again. The bill creates the Intergenerational Poverty Task Force within the Legislature. The leftist NE Appleseed Center supported this bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 607A: Mello.** To appropriate \$4.2 million in FY 2015-16 and \$5.4 million in FY 2016-17, later \$15 million annually to sustain increases needed to fund LB 607. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 610: Smith.** To increase the state wholesale motor fuel excise tax by 6c per gallon by 2019, accruing \$75 million in each of the next 4 yrs. split among cities, counties, and state. The average driver will pay about \$45 more annually. The bill hiked our gas tax by 23%, making us the 16th highest gas tax state in the nation and over the national average. Moreover, gas prices have risen from \$1.80 to \$2.68 per gallon in NE, up 88c per gallon. Rural residents who must drive longer distances will suffer most. The Dept. of Roads has the highest overhead of all NE departments. Adjusted for inflation, the roads dept. receives state revenues at the highest level in 20 yrs. The 2015 state budget for road construction projects to improve roads is a record high. A better alternative is to outsource and privatize roads dept. operations. To increase revenue, senators could have used funding from the \$70 million in excess federal money found in the state budget by former State Auditor Mike Foley. The liberal League of Municipalities supported the bill. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 610A: Smith.** To appropriate \$6.3 million in FY 2015-16 and \$25.4 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 610. BAD BILL/ PASSED

**LB 610ov:** To override the gubernatorial veto of LB 610. VETO OVERRIDDEN

**LB 610Aov:** To override the gubernatorial veto of LB 610A. VETO OVERRIDDEN

**LB 623: Nordquist.** To give valid NE drivers licenses or ID cards to 2,800+ young illegal aliens amnestied by Obama, their deportations delayed at least 2 yrs. A future conservative president could revoke this deferred deportation amnesty and thus reverse this legislation. They must return their licenses when their term of deferred deportation action expires, but no enforcement, so this amendment is wishful thinking. This measure could allow these illegals to fraudulently register to vote, serve on a jury, and collect welfare. Sen. John McCollister designated LB 623 as his priority bill, though state law prohibits public benefits for illegal aliens. Both the Dept. of Homeland Security and INS state that the Obama amnesty does not offer legal status or a path to citizenship, only a temporary lawful presence. Gov. Ricketts opposed the bill. Proponents will use this legislation to award drivers licenses to other illegal aliens, eligibility given future categories of amnestied illegals. The Mexican Consulate, OTOC, Nebraskans for Peace, leftist NE Appleseed Center, and ACLU-NE praised the override vote. (see NTF issue paper). BAD BILL/ PASSED/VETOED

**LB 623ov:** To override gubernatorial veto of LB 623. VETO OVERRIDDEN

**LB 627: Campbell.** To treat pregnancy as a disability in work environment and hiring, a costly increase for employers. Employers must provide pregnant employees periodic rest, special equipment for sitting, longer breaks and potty breaks, modified work schedules, assistance with manual labor, light duty assignments, temporary transfers to less strenuous work, and job restructuring. The bill forbids hiring, promotion, compensation, and firing discrimination against pregnant

women, inviting frivolous lawsuits. This legislation, which applies to businesses with more than 15 employees, will encourage employers to not hire pregnant women. The ACLU and NE AFL-CIO supported the bill. BAD BILL/  
PASSED

**LB 657: Hadley.** Budget bill that includes \$940,000 to begin an unneeded Master Teacher Program. In FY 2015-16, \$1,050,000 in General Funds and in FY 2016-17 \$1,050,000 in General Funds, to expand dental services for 7 community health centers. To provide \$500,000 in both FY 2015-16 and FY 2016-17 to the Department of Economic Development to provide direct funding to Economic Development Districts. Increased funding for community developmental disability providers by \$8.2 million in FY 2015-16 and by \$17 million in FY 2016-17. BAD BILL/  
PASSED

**LB 661: Hadley.** To annually distribute 25% of federal Medicaid fraud settlement funds given NE to federally-qualified state health care homes for the medically underserved poor for distribution to federally-qualified NE health centers. BAD BILL/  
PASSED

**LB 663: Hadley.** To raise the salaries of the state supreme court chief justice and judges from \$160,540 to \$171,974 in 2016. 5 additional categories of judges, like district court judges, will see identical percentage increases. BAD BILL/  
PASSED

**LB 663A: Hadley.** To appropriate about \$1.5 million in FY 2015-16 and \$3.08 million in FY 2016-17 to fund LB 663. BAD BILL/  
PASSED

