

NACO Legislative Report



January 19, 2024

[Video Report](#)

Bill Introductions Conclude

The introduction of [new bills](#) wrapped up this week, with a total of 597 bills and 11 constitutional amendments offered during this short [session](#).

Debate on revisions to the Legislature's [rules](#) concluded Friday after the adoption of a handful of amendments.

For the next six weeks, the Legislature will hold floor debate in the mornings and committee hearings in the afternoons. Bills designated by senators and committees as 2024 priority bills will generally be debated first. A full list of priority bills can be found [here](#).

Debate on [Monday](#) will start with [LB461](#), a bill to revise processes for state purchasing. It was introduced and prioritized by Speaker Arch.

Property Tax Proposals In State of the State Address

Governor Jim Pillen highlighted his proposal to provide property tax relief during his State of the State address to the Legislature on Thursday. It includes a hard [cap](#) on local spending and additional, front-loaded tax [credits](#). To fund the credits, sales tax exemptions and other loopholes would be closed. Other bills would increase the sales tax rate. The full text of his comments can be found [here](#).

On January 25, Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Michael Heavican will present the annual State of the Judiciary address.

County Purchasing Act Increases Proposed

The dollar amounts triggering competitive bidding would be increased by [LB938](#), a bill introduced on NACO's behalf by Senator Tom Brandt. The current trigger of \$50,000 would be increased to \$70,000, then \$90,000 in 2029 and \$110,000 in 2034. Corresponding changes would be made to amounts subject to informal bidding and for the disposal of surplus property and mobile equipment. These statutory changes would adapt the Act to reflect increasing costs of doing business without requesting legislative changes each time. The amounts were last increased in 2018.

The bill states that counties could make purchases or dispose of surplus property at auction. The maximum amounts that could be spent on an item at auction would be set by the county board and the actual amount

approved at the next meeting after the purchase. Notice of a potential purchase would be posted on the county's website and at the courthouse.

The public hearing will be held by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee on Thursday, January 25 at 1:30 p.m. in Room 1507 of the State Capitol. County officials are invited to testify in person or provide written support through a link on LB938's page on the Legislature's website.

The committee will also hear [LB940](#) that would specifically authorize counties to provide funding for services for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. An audit last summer raised questions about the documentation needed for such funding.

In addition, the committee will hear [LB936](#) that would repeal county authority to issue permits for bowling alleys, roadhouses, carnivals and other recreational activities. The permit authority and fees amounts were last amended in 1977 and are rarely issued.

New Bill Introductions

Senators introduced 221 bills this week. In addition to the property tax package, new bills would [prohibit camping](#) on political subdivision property, reduce periods for [early voting](#), and eliminate hearings on [conditional use permits](#). Below are some of the other bills that could affect counties. [Here](#) is a complete list of bills introduced.

County Operations

[LB1198](#) (Moser) Provide for the withholding of the residential address of a county attorney or deputy county attorney from the public in county records

[LB1246](#) (Brewer) Change provisions relating to county government

[LB1277](#) (Wayne) Change provisions relating to emergency proclamations for disasters, emergencies, and civil defense emergencies made by the Governor

[LB1302](#) (Lippincott) Adopt the Cybersecurity Preparedness Act

[LB1357](#) (McDonnell) Prohibit camping on certain property owned by political subdivisions.

[LB1358](#) (McDonnell) Require approval of the registered voters to increase salaries of governing bodies of political subdivisions as prescribed

[LB1375](#) (Lowe) Change powers and duties of county planning commissions and county boards related to conditional use permits and special exceptions

[LB1417](#) (Brewer) Create, eliminate, terminate, and provide, change, eliminate, and transfer powers, duties, and membership of boards, commissions, committees, councils, task forces, panels, authorities, and departments and change and eliminate funds

Budgets/Property Tax

[LB1216](#) (Bostar) Change calculation of the base limitation for political subdivision budgets

[LB1217](#) (Bostar) Provide certain property tax exemptions and change valuation provisions relating to rent-restricted housing projects and sales-restricted houses

[LB1241](#) (von Gillern) Change provisions relating to property tax levy limits

[LB1317](#) (Linehan) State findings relating to property taxes

[LB1318](#) (Linehan) Change the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act and change provisions relating to certain transfers to the Cash Reserve Fund.

[LB1326](#) (Dungan) Change a tax and assessment provision under the Nebraska Housing Agency Act

[LB1346](#) (Vargas) Provide a property tax exemption for qualified affordable housing developments

[LB1361](#) (McDonnell) Adopt the Long-Term Resident Homestead Exemption Act.

[LB1362](#) (McDonnell) Change provisions relating to the valuation of residential property for property tax purposes.

[LB1366](#) (Cavanaugh, J.) Change provisions relating to the use of eminent domain

[LB1367](#) (Cavanaugh, J.) Adopt the Property Tax Circuit Breaker Act

[LB1372](#) (Brandt) Change provisions relating to individual and corporate income tax rates and property tax credits

[LB1397](#) (Murman) Redefine agricultural land and horticultural land for property tax purposes

[LB1414](#) (Linehan) Adopt the Property Tax Growth Limitation Act and change provisions relating to budget limitations

[LB1415](#) (Dover) Adopt the Property Tax Relief Act and change the Nebraska Property Tax Incentive Act

[LR285CA](#) (McDonnell) Constitutional amendment authorizing the Legislature to provide a different method of taxing residential property

[LR287CA](#) (Cavanaugh, J.) Constitutional amendment to require the Legislature to compensate political subdivisions for any locally imposed revenue source that is reduced or eliminated by the Legislature

Justice/Law Enforcement/Courts

[LB1339](#) (Brewer) Change provisions relating to possession of firearms in schools and authorize schools to provide emergency response mapping data to public safety agencies

Elections

[LB1211](#) (Hansen) Change provisions of the Election Act relating to early voting

[LB1297](#) (Lippincott) Provide requirements for voting and counting systems under the Election Act

[LB1390](#) (Bostar) Require a report and prohibit certain activities related to elections and to change and provide penalties

Broadband

[LB1336](#) (DeKay) Change provisions of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Act and transfer certain powers and duties to the Nebraska Broadband Office.

[LB1389](#) (Bostar) Provide for a personal property tax exemption for broadband equipment as prescribed

Committee Hearings Scheduled

Every bill introduced by the Legislature is the subject of a public hearing. Following is a schedule of bills that are of interest to counties in the coming weeks. Other bills not shown here may be heard at the same hearing. A complete list of [hearings](#) is available on the Legislature's website. For tips about testifying at a hearing, click [here](#).

Monday, January 22

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

[LB865](#) (Bostelman) Require annual reports to the Nebraska Broadband Office

[LB929](#) (Fredrickson) Provide for coordination of the 911 service system and the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline

[LB1031](#) (Bostelman) Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Telecommunications Universal Service Fund, dark fiber leases, and broadband telecommunications services

Tuesday, January 23

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

[LB900](#) (Brandt) Change provisions of the Nebraska Rules of the Road relating to the length of vehicles

Wednesday, January 24

Revenue Committee

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

[LB1177](#) (von Gillern) Change provisions relating to a documentary stamp tax exemption

Thursday, January 25

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LB936](#) (Bostar) Eliminate provisions relating to county regulation of certain recreation, entertainment, and amusement activities

[LB938](#) (Brandt) Change provisions of the County Purchasing Act

[LB940](#) (Dorn) Authorize certain actions by counties relating to facilities, programs, and services for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault

Judiciary Committee

Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

[LB914](#) (Cavanaugh, J.) Adopt the Uniform Unlawful Restrictions in Land Records Act

Friday, January 26

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LR276](#) (Ibach) Urge Congress to change the boundary of the Central Time Zone in Nebraska

Health and Human Services Committee

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

[LB1143](#) (Health and Human Services) Eliminate provisions relating to certain health districts

Judiciary Committee

Room 1113 - 1:30 PM

[LB870](#) (Cavanaugh, M.) Provide for additional rights of notification, information, and preservation of evidence under the Sexual Assault Victims' Bill of Rights Act

[LB977](#) (Blood) Prohibit discrimination based on military or veteran status

Revenue Committee

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

[LB949](#) (Linehan) Change provisions relating to inspection of real property by county assessors

[LB1093](#) (Bostar) Provide for limited law enforcement officer certificates and change provisions relating to tuition waivers under the First Responder Recruitment and Retention Act

Tuesday, January 30

Agriculture Committee

Room 2102 - 1:30 PM

[LB828](#) (Blood) Change provisions of the Nebraska Apiary Act and provide for the Pollinator Task Force, the Nebraska Apiary Registry, and immunity for certain damages relating to bees

[LB831](#) (Blood) Change provisions of the Noxious Weed Control Act and provide for control of restricted plants

[LB1142](#) (Wayne) Require and restrict certain actions of any animal control facility, animal rescue, animal shelter, or rabies control authority

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LB991](#) (Bostar) Adopt the Blockchain Basics Act

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