

NACO Legislative Report



March 21, 2025

[Video Report](#)

Session Reaches Mid-Point, Priority Bill Debate Begins

Monday, March 17 was the 45th day of the legislative session, marking the [mid-point](#) in of the 90-day session. The Legislature will hold one more week of committee [hearings](#) before moving to full-time floor debate. The rest of the session will focus on priority bills and beginning in mid-April, on the state's biennial budget.

Many of the priority bills are expected to be controversial and are likely to be filibustered. Some of these include changing to a winner-take-all process for awarding electoral votes ([LB3](#)); implementing sales taxes on candy, soda ([LB170](#)) and services ([LB169](#)); imposing gender restrictions on sports participation ([LB99](#)); authorizing online gaming ([LR20CA](#)) and abortion issues ([LB632](#)). Following a recess day on Monday, Tuesday's agenda shows possible first-round floor debate on paid sick leave ([LB415](#)), lab-grown meat ([LB246](#)), minimum wages ([LB258](#)) and exemptions from the Livestock Brand Act ([LB646](#)).

Speaker Arch announced the designation of Speaker [priority bills](#) on Monday. Some of these include:

[LB50](#) (DeKay) Change provisions relating to the distribution of the nameplate capacity tax

[LB133](#) (Holdcroft) Provide authority for animal control officers to enforce state or local animal control law

[LB166](#) (Hughes) Require the county treasurer to maintain confidentiality of certain persons' residential addresses

[LB561](#) (Brandt) Change maximum weight limits for vehicles carrying raw milk

[LB640](#) (Judiciary Committee) Change calculation of a sentence reduction for good behavior during confinement in a jail

Hearings Held This Week

Four days of committee hearings remain in this session. Committees will continue to meet periodically in executive sessions to discuss the advancement of bills.

Revenue Committee

On Thursday, the Revenue Committee heard a bill to revise the process for sending property owners pink postcards if the property tax request by the county, city, school district or community college exceeds an allowable growth factor. The pink postcard gives notice of a joint public hearing with a representative of each taxing entity that appears on the postcard presenting information about the tax request. The hearings are held in mid-

September. [LB683](#) would replace the pink postcards with a notice sent in June that would show the current and prior year's valuations and the time of each taxing entity's budget hearing. It would explain the difference between protesting the property's valuation and providing input on the budget. The Revenue Committee appears to recognize that the current process for the pink postcards is not timely, and asked several questions about how to provide the taxpayer notice of how their taxes are determined in a timely manner. NACO testified in support of the bill.

The committee has not yet taken action on LB683, but sent another pink postcard bill to the floor for debate. [LB384](#), as written, would have required a majority of the elected members of the governing body to participate in the pink post card joint public hearing. A Revenue Committee [amendment](#) would instead require one voting member to attend the hearing. A [bill](#) to change the joint public hearing date from September to July remains in committee, as does a [bill](#) to remove community colleges from the postcard because they no longer levy property taxes.

On Thursday the committee also heard [LB484](#) that would remove a definition of agricultural and horticultural land that was adopted last year. The bill would strike language stating that land used for commercial purposes, such as solar and wind farms, does not meet the definition of agricultural or horticultural property.

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Counties of all sizes could conduct all-mail elections in selected precincts or the entire county under a proposal heard by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. Existing law allows only counties under 10,000 to conduct all-mail elections. Of the 67 counties that are eligible to apply to the Secretary of State for permission to conduct all-mail elections, currently 11 counties vote entirely by mail and eight have some vote-by-mail precincts. All counties are authorized to conduct special elections by mail without applying to the Secretary of State. NACO testified in support of [LB237](#).

The committee also heard [LB218](#) that would require the Department of Motor Vehicles to automatically transmit voter registration information from driver's license applicants to the county clerk or election commissioner unless the applicant opts out. Because each set of information would have to be treated as a new voter registration application and verified against existing voter records, the time and costs to process voter registrations would be significant. The process could result in an increase in incomplete registrations which are time-intensive and expensive to resolve.

Judiciary Committee

The Judiciary Committee heard testimony this week on numerous law enforcement bills.

[LB73](#) would reduce the number of annual continuing education hours required for law enforcement officers in counties of less than 40,000. Officers in larger counties would continue to need 32 hours of training and smaller counties would need 20 hours. Although some training is available online, many programs must be attended in person. This training generally takes officers out of the county and requires counties to pay overtime costs for additional officers. County sheriffs testified in support of the bill, noting the hardship on agencies that are small or understaffed. An amendment was offered on behalf of the State Patrol to retain the 32-hour requirement for state troopers.

[LB301](#) would allow aliens who have been granted work authorization in the U.S. to become certified law enforcement officers. These officers and their dependents could receive public benefits such as retirement contributions related to their employment. The bill is intended to broaden the pool of potential law enforcement officers.

[LB277](#) would require the appointment of an experienced special prosecutor when a grand jury is called to investigate a death that occurs when an individual is being apprehended or in custody. Since 2015, the county attorney or a member of his or her staff serves as the prosecuting attorney in these cases. Any law enforcement officers or detention personnel who are involved in a death would not be permitted to return to duty until the grand jury investigation is complete.

[LB276](#) would require county attorneys to maintain Brady and Giglio lists of officers whose credibility has been placed in question due to misconduct or otherwise. The lists would be public documents and posted on county websites. It would also prohibit the use of no-knock warrants. These warrants are used to prevent the destruction of the objects for which law enforcement are searching or when the safety of an officer or other individual would be compromised.

[LB56](#) would require mortuaries and medical facilities to comply with requests from law enforcement officers to draw blood from drivers or pedestrians who are killed in motor vehicle accidents. The tests are used to determine the amount of alcohol or drugs in the body of the deceased.

[LB222](#) would prohibit law enforcement officers from stopping drivers when an equipment failure is the primary offense unless there is an immediate safety issue. Officers would need to digitally log or notify dispatch of the primary reason for the stop and could not search the vehicle without obtaining written consent or a warrant.

The committee also heard [LB620](#) to require residential property owners to maintain properties to community standards. Failure to do so could result in a declaration from the district court that the property is a public nuisance and subject to a receiver's lien that would compel the owner to make repairs.

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee

Counties and other governmental entities would be prohibited from keeping lists of privately-owned firearms, except as required by law or as necessary for criminal investigations. The Attorney General would investigate alleged violations of [LB686](#). In addition, companies that process credit cards would be prohibited from assigning merchant category codes to retailers that sell firearms that distinguish them from other retailers. Currently the codes do not indicate whether a purchaser is buying a gun or camping gear from a retailer that sells both. Proponents said [LB686](#) would protect the privacy of firearm owners.

[LB687](#) would prohibit governmental entities from entering into contracts for the purchase of goods or services unless the contract contains written verification that the company does not discriminate against a firearm entity or firearm trade association. The restriction would apply to contracts with companies with at least 10 full-time employees and a value of at least \$100,000 paid from public funds. Contracts with sole-source providers would be excepted. Firearm and ammunition manufacturers testifying on the bill said they had been declined for insurance due to the nature of their business.

[LB204](#) would prohibit private and public entities, including counties, from possessing biometric data without the prior written consent of the individual from whom it was collected. Legitimate law enforcement uses would be excepted.

Hearings Scheduled For Next Week

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

On March 27, the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee will hear [LB629](#) that would give voters the powers of initiative and referendum in each county. Initiatives are used by the people to place questions on the ballot. Referendums allow voters to repeal an action of the governing body. Several bills were introduced in the 1990's to give counties this authority. Senator Brian Hardin, who introduced the bill, has offered an [amendment](#) that would replace the original version with greater details about how each process would work.

Revenue Committee

On March 26, the Revenue Committee will hear bills to create income tax deductions ([LB643](#) and [LB649](#) with [AM632](#)) and a state highway infrastructure task force ([LB558](#)). The committee will hear two shell bills, [LB647](#) and [LB648](#), that could be replaced with substantive language if needed later in the session.

Judiciary Committee

On March 26, the Judiciary Committee will hear bills to expand political subdivisions' exposure to liability for tort claims for child abuse or sexual assault of a child. [LB236](#) states that protections provided under the Political Subdivisions Tort Claims Act would not apply when the harm is a proximate result of the failure of a political subdivision or its employees to exercise reasonable care to control a person it has charge over. [LB156](#) would apply to similar claims against schools. NACO historically opposes expanding the potential liability of counties.

On March 27, the committee will hear measures on the detention, prosecution and truancy of juveniles ([LB700](#), [LB492](#), [LB395](#), [LB466](#)).

A separate bill, [LB706](#) would require law enforcement agencies' dispatch personnel to screen calls to identify those involving persons with mental health concerns. Upon identifying a call as a mental health priority, the dispatcher would be required to notify the nearest unit that could be accompanied by a social worker trained in crisis intervention. The social worker would take the lead in interacting with the individual and using de-escalation measures to reduce the potential for violence or harm.

On March 28, the committee will hear bills on mental health issues, including the creation of a regional mental health expansion pilot program that was introduced by Senator Tanya Storer on behalf of the Attorney General. [LB386](#) would create the program to provide funding to a county law enforcement agency to expand mental health beds and encourage cooperation between law enforcement agencies serving the region.

[LB350](#) would shorten the time frames for holding hearings on commitment orders and require filing of paperwork with the court.

[LB351](#) would strike existing requirements for the Lincoln Regional Center to provide a designated number of beds for certain categories of patient admissions.

In addition, [LB600](#) would grant the Nebraska Department of Transportation authority to enforce variable speed limits and establish speed control enforcement in work and school zones. [LB616](#) would allow local authorities to enforce red light violations captured by automatic license plate readers.

The full hearing schedule is available [here](#).

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