

NACO Legislative Report



January 16, 2026

McKeon Resigns, Meyer Appointed

Following Senator Dan McKeon's resignation on Tuesday, Governor Jim Pillen appointed former Senator Fred Meyer of St. Paul to represent District 41 until a special election is held in November to fill the seat for the remaining two years of the term.

Governor Pillen presented his annual [State of the State](#) address on Thursday. He emphasized tax cuts, business opportunities available in Nebraska and social issues facing the state. On January 22, Nebraska Supreme Court Chief Justice Jeffrey Funke will present the State of the Judiciary address.

Bill [introductions](#) continued this week with a total of 407 bills and eight constitutional amendments introduced through January 16, the eighth day of the [session](#). Two days remain for bill introductions.

Floor debate on carryover bills began this week and will continue in the mornings through the end of February. Two of the bills advanced from General File, the first round of debate, are [LB60](#) to allow lottery tickets to be sold through vending machines and [LB463](#) to require school districts to develop cardiac emergency response plans.

On January 20, debate will begin on [LB384](#), a bill to require a majority of members of the governing bodies of participating political subdivisions to attend pink postcard hearings. A Revenue Committee [amendment](#) would instead require one voting member to attend. Later on the agenda, [LB203](#) would change the powers and duties of health directors related to directed health measures.

The Legislature's [standing committees](#) will begin public hearings on new legislation on January 20. Each bill that is introduced is assigned to a committee for a public hearing. Hearings generally begin at 1:30 p.m. The full hearing schedule is available [here](#) and selected bills of interest to counties are identified below. [Comments](#) can be provided in person at the hearing or online through the portal on each bill's landing page. For written testimony to be included within the record of the legislative hearing, it must be submitted prior to 8:00 a.m. (Central) on the day of the hearing. Comments are limited to 500 words. They are verified through a confirmation email returned to the submitter. The entire verification process must be completed prior to 8:00 a.m. in order to be included. Here are [tips for testifying](#) in person.

Reimbursement of Unfunded Mandates Debated

Counties and other political subdivisions would be fully reimbursed by the state for increased programs or services enacted by the state under a proposed constitutional amendment that was debated on January 16. Although [LR18CA](#) failed to advance from the first round on a 23-20 vote, much of the debate was about the logistics of implementation, rather than the policy of local governments funding state mandates.

Supporters pointed out that regardless of whether a mandated program is provided by the state or a political subdivision, the costs are borne by taxpayers. For counties, increased state mandates translates into higher property taxes.

Senators spoke about the challenges in identifying unfunded mandates on political subdivisions. For example, some mandates are requested by local governments and others are offset by fees or economic development opportunities. Increased criminal penalties could increase county costs but may also serve a public good. Some suggested using a net figure or requiring one mandate to be removed before another can be added.

Senator Rob Clements offered and withdrew an [amendment](#) to require reimbursement to be in the form of a specific appropriation, an increase in state aid, or an increase in the amount of a fee that could be retained by a political subdivision.

Pursuant to the Speaker's rules, bills that fail to advance from the first or second round of debate will not appear on the agenda again unless they are subsequently designated as a priority bill.

LR18CA was introduced last year by the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. An identical proposal, [LR16CA](#), was introduced by the Urban Affairs Committee. Last summer, NACO led the [research](#) on [LR195](#), an interim study of the impact of unfunded and underfunded mandates on county government.

Committee Hearings Next Week

Three bills introduced on NACO's behalf will be heard next week.

Revenue Committee

Two NACO bills that would modernize and clarify county practices will be heard by the Revenue Committee on Wednesday, January 21. [LB834](#) was introduced by Senator Kathleen Kauth to eliminate mobile home park permit fees. Other sections would specifically authorize assessors to appoint deputies and request emergency assessors exams for deputies, harmonize population references for counties over 100,000, and clarify that only counties and cities must include the cost of public safety services on tax statements. The bill would remove an unnecessary column for unreimbursed recreational tax credits on tax lists and allow delinquent real estate taxes on mobile homes to be extinguished after 15 years like other real property.

[LB770](#) would clarify that counties collect a one percent commission for their role in nameplate capacity tax distribution, as well as codifying existing commissions on distributions to reclamation districts and agricultural societies. LB770 was introduced by Senator Dan Lonowski at NACO's request.

As second bill on nameplate capacity commissions was introduced this week but has not been scheduled for a hearing. [LB1021](#) would prohibit counties from collecting commissions on nameplate capacity taxes and grant the state a three percent commission.

At the hearing on January 21, the committee will take testimony on [LB868](#), a bill to exempt beneficiaries of homicide victims from inheritance taxes. Applications for the exemption would be filed with the Department of Revenue.

Another NACO bill, [LB900](#), will be heard on January 22. It would increase distress warrant fees collected by sheriffs from \$2 to \$20 and revise commissions to reflect inflation. The bill is part of an effort by NACO to modernize fees to cover the costs of providing services.

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Persons who contract with veterans to assist them in obtaining benefits would be allowed to receive compensation for their services by [LB767](#). The bill was introduced in response to last year's [LB693](#), that would prohibit such actions. These services are already available at no cost to veterans through county veterans service officers. The hearing will be held on January 21.

At the same hearing, the committee will hear testimony on [LB786](#), a bill to redirect funds generated from Military Honor license plates to a fund for grants for needy service members, and [LB787](#) that would change reporting by the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs.

On January 22, the committee will hear [LB951](#), a bill to allow persons residing in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of a municipality to vote in city elections. [LR283CA](#) would state that only U.S. citizens may be electors and [LR284CA](#) would allow 16-year-olds to vote.

Judiciary Committee

On January 22, the Judiciary Committee will hear three bills, [LB804](#), [LB755](#), and [LB816](#), to provide peer support services to law enforcement officers and other public safety personnel. [LB727](#) would allow law enforcement agencies to obtain and use epinephrine autoinjectors.

Natural Resources

Counties and cities could assume regulatory authority over mobile home parks, swimming pools, and recreation camps as part of [LB760](#) that will be heard by the Natural Resources Committee on January 21. Local governments could adopt minimum requirements for the establishment, operation and maintenance of these facilities, including issuing licensing and imposing penalties for violations.

At the same hearing, the committee will hear a bill to clean up language from last year's bill to merge the Department of Environment and Energy and the Department of Natural Resources. [LB759](#) would also revise distribution requirements for the Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund and exempt entry onto property for the Perkins County Canal project from consideration as trespassing.

Applications for burn permits would need to include details about the burn and the approximate number of acres to be burned under [LB823](#). It will be heard on January 22. [LB897](#), which has been referred to the Judiciary Committee and not yet scheduled for a hearing, would allow a municipality or fire district to charge a fee to cover their costs in responding to a fire that violates the statewide open burning ban.

NACO Legislative Bill Review Set for January 23

NACO's Legislative Committee will meet at 8:30 a.m. (CST) on Friday, January 23 to review and take positions on bills that have been introduced through the first eight days of the 2026 legislative session. Committee members will meet in person and all county officials are invited to join a live webinar of the discussion. Each affiliate group has been asked to review the bills pertinent to their office prior to the meeting and select one of their members to speak to their recommended positions on bills. Register for the webinar [here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The Committee will meet again on January 30 to take positions on bills introduced during the final two days of introductions. A webinar will not be held so comments on those bills should be provided to your NACO Board representative to share at the meeting.

There will be no Friday Action Call due to the bill review.

Selected Committee Hearings

Following are selected hearings that are of interest to counties. The full list of hearings is available [here](#).

Monday, January 19 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Tuesday January 20, 2026

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

[LB738](#) (Rountree) Provide for Honoring Women Veterans license plates

[LB769](#) (DeKay) Provide for University of Nebraska State Museum License Plates, provide duties to the Department of Motor Vehicles and the University of Nebraska, and create a fund

Urban Affairs Committee

Room 1200 - 1:30 PM

[LB726](#) (Quick) Update references to the National Electrical Code in the State Electrical Act

[LB800](#) (Urban Affairs Committee) Adopt updates to building and energy codes

[LB801](#) (Urban Affairs Committee) Adopt updates to building and energy codes

Note: Hearings on LB800 and LB801 will be combined

Wednesday January 21, 2026

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LB767](#) (Holdcroft) Adopt the Certified Help Options in Claims Expertise for Veterans Act

[LB786](#) (Sanders) Change provisions relating to Military Honor Plates under the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, create a fund, provide for grants to certain needy service members, and provide duties to the Adjutant General

[LB787](#) (Sanders) Change provisions relating to the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs and eliminate provisions relating to veterans homes

Natural Resources Committee

Room 1023 - 1:30 PM

[LB759](#) (Brandt) Change provisions relating to water wells, the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, the Perkins County Canal Project Act, and the Nebraska Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund

[LB760](#) (Brandt) Change and eliminate provisions of the Environmental Safety Act

Revenue Committee

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

[LB834](#) (Kauth) Change provisions relating to county assessors, the Property Tax Administrator, real property assessments, taxes levied in counties, delinquent taxes owed to counties, remission of sales and use taxes, and mobile homes

[LB770](#) (DeKay) Authorize fees for the collection of certain taxes of reclamation districts and county agricultural societies and change the distribution of the nameplate capacity tax

[LB868](#) (DeKay) Provide an inheritance tax exemption relating to victims of homicide and change provisions relating to when certain inheritance taxes are due

Thursday January 22, 2026

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LB951](#) (Ballard) Include extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction in municipal elections and districts

[LR283CA](#) (DeKay) Constitutional amendment to state that only a United States citizen may be an elector

[LR284CA](#) (McKinney) Constitutional amendment to change the voting age to sixteen years of age

Judiciary Committee

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

[LB804](#) (Lonowski) Provide confidential peer support counseling for law enforcement officers, emergency services personnel, and Nebraska National Guard personnel

[LB816](#) (Storer) Provide privileges and immunities relating to peer support services communications by public safety personnel

[LB755](#) (Wordekemper) Adopt the Emergency Service Peer Support Act

Note: The hearings on LB804, LB816 and LB755 will be combined

[LB727](#) (Kauth) Authorize law enforcement agencies to obtain, maintain, and possess epinephrine autoinjectors for use by a law enforcement officer and require training

Natural Resources Committee

Room 1023 - 1:30 PM

[LB823](#) (Wordekemper) Change provisions relating to burning permits and the statewide open burning ban

Revenue Committee

Room 1524 - 1:30 PM

[LB900](#) (Lonowski) Change provisions relating to fees, commissions, and mileage of county sheriffs for distress warrants issued for the collection of taxes

Friday January 23, 2026

Judiciary Committee

Room 1525 - 1:30 PM

[LB764](#) (Holdcroft) Provide for certain Department of Correctional Services employees to be law enforcement officers

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee

Room 1524 - 12:00 PM

[LB820](#) (Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee) Change retirement provisions relating to approved identification documents, participation in certain retirement systems, state contributions, ex officio members of the Nebraska Investment Council, contributions by school districts, and computation of tax withholdings, and change the title of the executive director of the Nebraska Public Employees Retirement Systems

[LB821](#) (Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee) Eliminate certain verification requirements performed by the Public Employees Retirement Board and change duties of the board and the Nebraska Investment Council relating to retirement systems

Monday January 26, 2026

General Affairs Committee

Room 1023 - 1:30 PM

[LB782](#) (Riepe) Change the percentage of the tax on gross proceeds submitted to the Department of Revenue under the Nebraska County and City Lottery Act

[LB1001](#) (General Affairs Committee) Change and eliminate provisions relating to licensed racetrack enclosures, licenses and wagering on horseracing, assistance to problem gamblers, the Nebraska Commission on Problem Gambling, the Charitable Gaming Division of the Department of Revenue, keno at licensed racetrack enclosures, and the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

Room 1510 - 1:30 PM

[LB972](#) (Fredrickson) Change provisions relating to parking spaces for handicapped or disabled persons, the State Boat Act, the Motor Vehicle Registration Act, the Motor Vehicle Operator's License Act, the Motor Vehicle Safety Responsibility Act, and the Nebraska Rules of the Road

Tuesday January 27, 2026

Agriculture Committee

Room 1023 - 1:30 PM

[LB807](#) (lbach) Change the administration of the Noxious Weed Control Act from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Water, Energy, and Environment and change provisions of the Noxious Weed Control Act and the Water Resources Cash Fund

[LB947](#) (Agriculture Committee) Change fees under the Plant Protection and Plant Pest Act and the Pesticide Act, change provisions relating to the Weeds of the Great Plains book, and change, eliminate, and terminate certain funds

Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee

Room 1507 - 1:30 PM

[LB837](#) (Jacobson) Provide for rounding of certain cash transaction amounts

[LB783](#) (Hallstrom) Adopt the Uniform Assignment for Benefit of Creditors Act and provide an exemption to the documentary stamp tax

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