

NACO Legislative Report



March 6, 2026

Full Days of Floor Debate Begin

The Legislature began full days of floor debate this week. After a [recess day](#) on Monday, senators advanced a bill to provide confidentiality of certain Worker's Compensation reports ([LB455](#)) from General File before spending much of Tuesday and Wednesday in extended debate on a bill to increase cigarette taxes. After eight hours of debate on [LB1124](#), and adoption of an amendment to strike the proposed cigarette tax language and replace it with a revision to the current tiered tax structure on vape products ([LB712](#)), a cloture vote fell two votes short and debate ended. As introduced, the bill would have generated funds to partially offset Medicaid costs incurred from smoking.

During the debate on LB1124, senators laid the groundwork for debate on the budget, which will begin on Monday. [LB1071](#), the main mid-biennium budget bill, and [LB1072](#), a bill to make transfers from cash reserves, agency funds and other programs, were reported out of the Appropriations Committee on Friday. Both are designated as Speaker major proposals. The 2026 biennial budget report can be found [here](#). The preliminary version is [here](#) and Governor Pillen's recommendations are [here](#).

Governor Signs Riparian Weed Control Bill

Governor Pillen signed nearly a dozen bills that were passed last week. [LB807](#) shifts grant funding for riparian weed control programs from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Water, Energy and Environment. In 2007, the Legislature appropriated \$5 million to help control invasive vegetation in waterways, but funding has decreased to a \$353,000 appropriation last year. Some grant funding has also been provided for riparian weed control projects through the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The move would make consistent funding available without the need for state General Fund appropriations. Riparian weed control projects have increased channel capacity, reduced flooding and infrastructure damage, and minimized the state's obligations to a water compact.

In addition, Pillen signed [LB70](#) that allows for a second adult to adopt a minor child. [LB783](#) adopts the Uniform Assignment for Benefit of Creditors Act as an alternative to bankruptcy for insolvent debtors. It creates an exemption from documentary stamp taxes for transfers made under the Act. [LB795](#) and [LB877](#) add bromazepam and other substances to the list of controlled substances.

Three bills were passed by the Legislature on Friday and await the governor's action. [LB771](#) would prohibit rideshare companies from using dynamic pricing for seven days after a state of emergency declared by the Governor when the emergency impacts the transportation of persons, suppliers, goods, or equipment. The prohibition must be confined to the areas included within the emergency proclamation.

Publication Bill Advances from General File

[LB 596](#), one of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs priority bills, was advanced from General File with an [amendment](#) containing several bills introduced on behalf of NACO. The bill as introduced last year would allow publication of notices in a digital newspaper to substitute for a print newspaper if the digital paper does not have a print publication. The committee amendment clarifies the original bill by adding distinctions between digital versions of newspapers that publish exclusively online and e-editions that are digital facsimiles of a print edition. The latter would be considered a legal newspaper only if notices are contemporaneously published in a print edition of the paper or the paper has ceased publication.

The committee amendment also provides that public bodies would be required to designate the method of giving notice of the time and place of each meeting and record it in their minutes. At least four times each year, notice would have to be given of the regular meeting schedule and published in a legal newspaper of general circulation within the body's jurisdiction. Failure to comply with this publication requirement would not cause any actions taken by the board to be void or voidable. This new language would replace requirements to post on a newspaper's website and a statewide repository of meeting notices.

Public bodies would have to make at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act accessible to the public in meeting rooms but would not have to "post" it.

NACO, the League of Nebraska Municipalities, the Nebraska Association of School Boards, and the Nebraska Press Association negotiated these amendments over the summer. The concepts were part of [LR192](#), an interim study introduced by Government Committee Chair Rita Sanders, that was heard in October.

Three NACO bills were included in the committee amendment. Language from [LB919](#) would modernize records preservation laws by allowing the use of accessible durable mediums in addition to microfilm. LB919 was introduced by Senator Sanders.

[LB923](#) would give counties specific authority to combine warrants from multiple funds into one document, allow dated military discharge records to be transferred to the State Historical Society, eliminate a requirement for county clerks in counties over 150,000 to prepare an annual estimate of supplies, and repeal farm name registrations. Senator Stan Clouse introduced LB923.

[LB896](#) would increase marriage license fees from \$25 to \$50 to cover the cost of issuance. Fees for certified copies would be increased from \$9 to \$16 to mirror the cost of certified copies issued by the state's Office of Vital Records. Senator Dan Lonowski introduced the bill as part of NACO's effort to right-size fees to cover the actual costs of services.

A separate amendment was adopted that would harmonize publication requirements for name changes for adults and children. Currently adult petitioners must publish notice of pending name changes once a week for four consecutive weeks and minors must publish for two consecutive weeks. The amendment would change both publication requirements to two consecutive weeks. The amendment was introduced as [LB739](#) and heard by the Judiciary Committee.

Another amendment was adopted that would revise unclaimed property publication requirements to allow a display ad on how to search for unclaimed property as an alternative to listing the names of persons with unclaimed property. It was based on Senator Barry DeKay's [LB869](#).

An amendment was offered based on [LB1159](#) but withdrawn after concerns that it was unconstitutional special legislation. It would have allowed a living person to be named to the Nebraska Hall of Fame. Although not named directly, the only person eligible under the specific requirements listed in the bill would be former Husker head coach and athletic director Tom Osborne. An amendment will be offered on Select File to address the constitutional concerns.

Transportation Bill Advanced from First Round

[LB972](#), a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) cleanup bill, was advanced from General File on Thursday with a committee [amendment](#) containing five other bills heard by the committee. Among other provisions, the introduced bill would codify guidance about the registration of untitled trailers and change to one In Transit placard, rather than two, as part of the transition to a single license plate in the 2029 plate issuance cycle. It would make solid-color license plates available in black, red, blue or green with white letters. Revenue would be directed to the DMV Cash Fund. When the bill was heard by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, representatives of the developmental disability community suggested instead using the funds for infrastructure grants for service providers as was proposed by [LB1092](#).

The committee amendment contains a bill to allow DMV to make a determination that a Nebraska resident is avoiding motor vehicle taxes and fees by registering their vehicle in another state ([LB1104](#)). It would change fees related to motor vehicle dealer licenses ([LB922](#)) and create a new class of dealership licenses for recreational vehicles ([LB1121](#)). Other bills included in the package would create alternate license plates to honor the service of women veterans ([LB738](#)) and promote museums managed by the University of Nebraska ([LB769](#)).

Two other amendments based on license plate bills were adopted. One, based on [LB1099](#), would create Scarlet and Cream license plates. A subsequent floor amendment was adopted to harmonize the fees for these plates with other alternative plates. The fees would be directed to the DMV Cash Fund.

Another, based on [LB786](#), would redistribute about \$30,000 of funds generated from Military Honor license plates from the Nebraska Veteran Cemetery System to a new Military Department Aid Fund beginning in 2027. The Adjutant General would administer these funds and award grants to needy members of the National Guard and Air Guard.

The Transportation Committee reported [LB1126](#), its other priority bill, to General File with amendments. As introduced, LB1126 would create the Infrastructure Development Investment Program to provide assistance in the form of loans to eligible entities, including counties. Political subdivisions could enter into public-private partnership contracts and accept unsolicited bids for certain projects. Fees for oversize loads would be increased and a new category created for superloads.

A committee [amendment](#) contains provisions from [LB1107](#), an update of rural road improvement bonding provisions introduced by Senator Glen Meyer on NACO's behalf.

Bills Reported to General File

Committees continue to advance bills to the floor for debate.

Judiciary Committee

[LB1195](#), as introduced, would outright repeal a 1903 requirement for county jails to have matrons to supervise female inmates. A Judiciary Committee [amendment](#) would strike the original bill and instead require a female correctional officer to supervise female inmates in counties with a city of the metropolitan or primary class. All county and city jails would be required to comply with the rules and regulations of the Jail Standards Board regarding cross-gender supervision and cross-gender searches of inmates.

Natural Resources Committee

[LB1010](#), which appears on Monday's agenda for potential General File debate, would change the review process for energy storage resources, commonly called battery storage. A Natural Resources Committee [amendment](#) contains language from [LB1064](#) requiring large load electrical customers to curtail loads or deploy onsite backup generation during emergencies. Concepts from [LB1111](#) would require data centers to submit annual reports about the size and location of the data center, electrical and water usage, sales tax exemptions, incentive payments, and other information. LB1010 is a Natural Resources Committee priority bill.

[LR298CA](#), Senator Tom Brandt's priority measure, is a proposed constitutional amendment to assure that lottery proceeds designated for the Nebraska Environmental Trust are used exclusively for funding grants for

conservation and projects related to nature.

Urban Affairs Committee

[LB1114](#), an Urban Affairs Committee priority bill, also appears on Monday's agenda for potential debate. As introduced, LB1114 would reduce the timeline for vacant and nonconforming lots and structures to become eligible for expedited review for tax increment financing. Currently, these parcels must have been within the corporate limits of a city for at least 60 years. LB1114 would shorten that period to 25 years. A committee [amendment](#) would increase the number of inland port authorities that can be created in the state from five to six ([LB915](#)). Language from [LB976](#) would change the balance of resident and non-resident property owners on sanitary and improvement district boards of trustees. [LB850](#) would allow metropolitan and primary class cities to use economic development programs to construct or rehabilitate housing. [LB981](#) would require housing agencies in metropolitan class cities to inspect for and treat bedbugs.

Business and Labor Committee

[LB1113](#), the state claims bill, was advanced by the Business and Labor Committee. [LB1170](#), which was heard jointly with LB1133, remains in committee. LB1170 would allow counties to file more than one claim for the prosecution costs of an incident at a state correctional institution. The bill would also revise the presumptions of injury that result in a public safety officer's death under the Line of Duty Compensation Act.

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

The committee has advanced several bills that do not have priority designations. These include [LB878](#) that would enact six weeks of paid maternity leave for state employees and [LB1058](#) that would appropriate \$150,000 for a grant for tourism and visitor promotion services.

Executive Board

[LB986](#), which was heard by the Executive Board, would allow campaign funds to be used for protective security measures such as security systems and personnel.

Bills Advanced from General File

The Legislature amended and advanced senator, committee, and Speaker priority bills from General File, the first round of debate.

[LB838](#), as [amended](#) and advanced, would allow cash transactions to be rounded up or down to accommodate the declining number of pennies in circulation. Rounding would be considered an administrative settlement of the physical payment and not an unconstitutional commutation of taxes. This concept was introduced as [LB837](#). Other sections of LB838 as amended would create guidelines for social media platforms to investigate and report fraudulent advertisements ([LB1118](#)) and synchronize the Uniform Probate Code and the Uniform Trust Code ([LB1160](#)) to increase homestead and exempt property allowances for decedent's estates. It would recognize a putative child for inheritance purposes as someone for whom the deceased has stood in the acknowledged role of a parent for at least ten years. Such an individual may be treated as a lineal descendant, or Class I beneficiary, for the calculation of inheritance taxes.

[LB1235](#) would authorize the Nebraska Medical Cannabis Commission to establish a maximum \$50,000 fee for applications and renewals. The funds would support the administration and enforcement of the Commission. A General Affairs Committee [amendment](#) would revise the definition of "bottle club" ([LB1085](#)) and allow local governments to create a consumption-only option for entertainment districts for a \$25 fee ([LB1128](#)).

[LB901](#), a Revenue Committee priority bill, contains provisions from several bills heard by the committee. Provisions from [LB920](#) would increase taxes on mechanical amusement devices. Although the tax rate for counties and cities would increase, their shares would decrease, resulting in no net change of taxes received. [LB1131](#) would create an income tax credit for programs supporting victims of domestic violence and human

trafficking. It would be funded by striking personal property taxes and an exemption from sales and use taxes for data centers.

Bills Advanced from Select File

The Legislature advanced more than 20 bills from Select File on Thursday and Friday. Following are some the bills that would impact counties.

[LB900](#) 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.

[LB834](#) would modernize and clarify county practices. It would eliminate mobile home park permit fees. It 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. An [amendment](#) was adopted to include mobile homes within statutory processes available to landlords to dispose of abandoned property.

[LB816](#) would provide confidentiality for peer support services communications by public safety personnel. An [amendment](#) was adopted to make a technical correction to the Nebraska Mental Health Commitment Act.

[LB1001](#) would permit individuals 19 years of age or older to participate in keno at licensed racetrack enclosures in areas separate from casino gaming floors. An [amendment](#) was adopted based on [LB1120](#) that would allow certain organizations to conduct a progressive raffle or jackpot and allow tickets to be sold through a vending device.

[LB823](#), would require applicants for land management burning permits to identify whether the intended burn is a controlled burn or a prescribed burn and defines each term.

[LB759](#), as amended on General File, includes provisions from [LB760](#) that require local governments to adopt minimum requirements for the establishment, operation and maintenance of mobile home parks, swimming pools, and recreation camps, including issuing licensing and imposing penalties for violations. The Department of Water, Energy and Environment would retain regulatory authority over drinking water, wastewater, minimum flood plain standards and other areas.

Other provisions of the bill as advanced would make technical corrections in last year's merger of the Department of Environment and Energy and the Department of Natural Resources. It would eliminate an annual meeting to determine the percentage distribution of grants from the Litter Reduction and Recycling Fund. Other sections would exempt entry onto property for geotechnical work related to the Perkins County Canal project from consideration as trespassing.

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