

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

LEAGUE OF NEBRASKA MUNICIPALITIES

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ITEMS OF INTEREST TO MUNICIPALITIES

- **LB 77:** “Constitutional carry” bill advances to final round of debate
- **LB 683:** Broadband Office bill advances
- **NLC Congressional City Conference:** Thanks to municipal officials from Nebraska who attended this conference focusing on infrastructure, affordable housing, ARP Act and other important priorities

NOT ALL ITEMS OF INTEREST ARE INCLUDED ON THIS LIST.
ALSO SEE THE REMAINDER OF THE LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN.

LB 77: “Constitutional carry” bill advances to final round of debate

LB 77, introduced by Gordon **Sen. Tom Brewer**, allows a person to carry a concealed weapon without a permit in Nebraska. Minors and prohibited persons, defined as persons who are prohibited from possessing a firearm by state or federal law, are not allowed to carry concealed weapons. The bill outlines places or premises where a person is not allowed to carry a concealed handgun when the owner or employer of the place or premises prohibits it. Currently in Nebraska, getting a concealed-carry

permit requires passing a criminal background check, paying a \$100 fee, and taking an eight- to 16-hour gun safety class.

The first section of LB 77 states that “the regulation of the ownership, possession, storage, transportation, sale and transfer of firearms and other weapons is a matter of statewide concern.” The bill goes on to say that municipalities do not have the power to regulate firearms except as expressly provided by state law. Also, municipalities are not allowed to require registration of

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firearms or other weapons. Any city or village ordinance in violation of these provisions will be declared null and void. Because of this language, a League representative testified in opposition to the bill citing concerns about local control. The

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LB 683: Broadband Office bill advances

On March 31, **LB 683** introduced by **Sen. Suzanne Geist** of Lincoln, to create the Broadband Office within the Department of Transportation advanced to Select File by overcoming a filibuster with a 43 – 1 vote to invoke cloture allowing the bill to advance on a 43 – 2 vote.

The purpose of LB 683 is to create the Broadband Office within the Department of Transportation with the Director to be appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature

As amended by the committee amendments the duties of the Broadband Office are to:

- Engage in outreach and collaborate with all interested parties;
- Develop a broadband strategic plan for the state;
- Coordinate the broadband activity of all state entities that maximizes all public and private resources and encourages innovative models of infrastructure ownership;
- Coordinate state agencies on policy matters



Sen. Suzanne Geist
District 25

affecting the use of federal and state funding for broadband purposes;

- Provide state advocacy of broadband issues on the federal level;
- Ensure funding is utilized in a cost effective manner;
- Oversee the coordination of programs for schools and libraries and digital inclusion and equity projects; and
- Provide public information and resources.

LB 683 was supported by the League because of the possibility of expanded technical assistance for villages and cities that want to improve local broadband. LB 683 also was supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation,

the Nebraska Rural Broadband Alliance, the Nebraska Farm Bureau, the Nebraska Cattlemen, the Nebraska Corn Growers Association, the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, the Nebraska Soybean Association, the Nebraska State Dairy Association, the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association and Renewable Fuels Nebraska and others. ■



Congressman Don Bacon briefed Nebraskans on recent national security issues at the Nebraska Breakfast in Washington D.C. on March 29.

NLC Congressional City Conference: Thanks to municipal officials from Nebraska who attended this conference focusing on infrastructure, affordable housing, ARP Act and other important priorities

Thanks to municipal officials from Nebraska who took time from their busy schedules to attend the annual Congressional City Conference (CCC) sponsored by the National League of Cities (NLC). More than 3,000 municipal officials from across the United States attended the conference which focused on the importance of infrastructure, affordable housing, ARP Act and other significant priorities.

Several State League Directors outlined concerns to the NLC staff about “zoning reform” issues supported by

realtors and home builders. State League Directors emphasized the need to underscore the importance of local control when dealing with affordable housing related issues. Municipalities “plan” for housing but are not in the business of “building” houses; zoning regulations are critically important and do not need to be undermined to achieve affordable housing in communities. ■

See additional pictures on page 4



From left to right - image 1: LNM President Deb VanMatre visited with Congressman Adrian Smith after the Nebraska Breakfast. In 2008, Mayor VanMatre worked for him in his Grand Island District Office where she served for two and one-half years as his "Constituent Services Liaison for Agriculture" helping constituents address issues or problems they had with federal agencies such as the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Postal Service. She also represented Congressman Smith at industry events and conferences relating to agriculture and natural resources. Images 2 & 3: President Deb VanMatre also visited with Congressman Don Bacon and U.S. Senator Deb Fischer and other officials representing Nebraska in D.C.

Firearms

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League encouraged changes to the bill to allow each municipality to determine which firearm regulations are right for their community. The cities of Lincoln and Omaha also continue to oppose LB 77.

On the first round of debate, the Legislature adopted an amendment that provides for an additional penalty if a person carries a firearm during the commission of a dangerous misdemeanor. With the amendment added, the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association and the Police Officers' Association of Nebraska moved to support the bill and the Omaha police union changed their

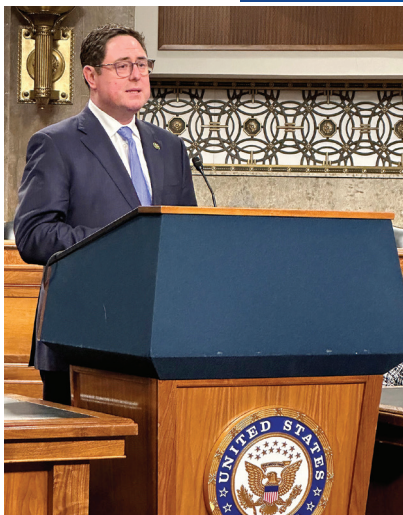
position to neutral on the bill.

After eight hours of debate, a cloture motion was filed. A cloture motion ends debate on a bill but requires 33 Senators to support it. The cloture motion was adopted on a 36-10 vote. The bill advanced to the second round of debate on a vote of 36-12.

This week, the Legislature started the second round of debate on LB 77. No new amendments were adopted. The cities of Lincoln and Omaha continue to raise concerns about the bill including that LB 77 may allow all weapons, including concealed-carry and other weapons, onto public transportation. The

language of the bill allowing owners or employers of places and premises to prohibit concealed carry does not seem to include public transportation based on the mobile nature of public transportation. There also were concerns raised about concealed-carry weapons in municipal parks and whether LB 77 allows a municipality to prohibit concealed-carry in parks.

As with the first round of debate, a cloture motion was filed to end the filibuster on the bill. The cloture motion was adopted on a 33-10 vote and the bill was then advanced to the final round of debate on a 31-10 vote. ■



On March 29, Congressman Mike Flood briefed those attending the Nebraska Breakfast on the recent banking crisis involving banks in Silicon Valley as well as other important issues he is addressing in his committee work.



At the Nebraska Breakfast on March 29, League President Deb VanMatre thanked Nebraska's Congressional Delegation for their ongoing work to assist municipalities in addressing infrastructure needs.