

*Telephone conference report to Imperial, □
Grant and Palisade
on Tuesday, April 13.*

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Wednesday marked the final day of the second session of the 101st Nebraska Legislature.

On Tuesday, 44th District Senator Mark Christensen of Imperial said they only had three bills on the agenda, of which all three passed.

Wednesday, the senators reconvened at 1:30 p.m. CT for consideration of any possible veto overrides.

One of the bills still hanging in the balance after Tuesday's session was LB 862, Christensen's bill to broaden the language of the occupation tax in LB 701.

The bill seeks to allow other NRDs in the state to use the tax if they meet certain conditions.

The new language would still provide the use of the occupation tax if the Nebraska Supreme Court would overturn a district court ruling that said the current occupation tax is constitutional.

□ he bill passed last week on a 40-2 vote but Governor Heineman had still not decided Tuesday whether to sign it or veto it.

□ If it did get vetoed, Christensen thought he may have enough votes to override a veto but said the 10-vote margin of passage would slim down on a veto override vote. Thirty votes are needed for an override of a governor veto.

The pro-life movement in Nebraska scored major gains with the passage and signing of two abortion-related bills.

LB 594, the Women's Health Protection Act, will put on more pre-abortion counseling requirements on doctors.

The bill requires a reasonable evaluation of risk factors (physical, psychological, emotional, demographic, or situational) before an abortion is performed.

It also authorizes civil remedies for the failure to comply with the act.

LB 1103, the Abortion Pain Prevention Act, outlined fetal development and the fetus' ability to experience pain.

The new law states that no abortion shall be performed unless a physician has made a determination of probable gestational age of the unborn child.

No abortions can be performed when the probable gestational age of the unborn child is 20 or more weeks (from conception), unless, "in reasonable medical judgment," the woman is experiencing a medical emergency.

The bill also carries certain physician reporting requirements and penalties for violations of the new law.

A quick look at the session

When asked about high and low points of the session during his weekly teleconference Tuesday, Christensen said gaining more funding for the work ethic camp in McCook was a highlight.

He said the district court's recent ruling that the occupation tax in LB 701 is legal was also a high-water mark.

Not being able to move LB 646, his bill to fund economic development through a livestock growth initiative, proved to be a disappointment.

It would have provided incentives to counties to fund infrastructure improvements for the development of livestock growth within a county.

A wrap-up of this year's legislative session from Christensen's perspective will follow in the coming weeks.

Senator MARK CHRISTENSEN holds a weekly teleconference at 7 a.m. MT each Tuesday with sites at the Imperial Republican, Midwest Electric in Grant and Southwest Public Power in Palisade. The teleconferences are open to the public and Christensen encourages constituent participation.