

*Telephone conference report to Grant and Palisade on Tuesday, Feb. 22.*

**By Jan Rahn**  
*Managing Editor*

"Things are moving along pretty well so far," said Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial during his weekly call-in for constituents in the area.

Looking toward a busy day of bill introduction on Wednesday, Christensen said he'd rather hear bills being heard by the Natural Resource Committee. Christensen also missed last week's introductions to that committee—something he's very interested in hearing.

Christensen said he'll have four of his own bills heard in Judiciary Committee that day—LB232, LB298, LB512 and LB518.

- LB232 is a bill authorizing the use of force in protecting unborn children—a proactive law that would give mothers the right to defend a fetus from unlawful attack.

The senator cited an appeals court ruling in Michigan that overturned a pregnant woman's conviction and prison sentence in connection with voluntary manslaughter for killing her boyfriend who had punched her in the stomach, causing her to lose the baby.

Christensen's bill would allow for protection of a fetus at any stage of development.

- LB298—known as the "Castle Doctrine" bill, it would give people the legal right to use deadly force to defend their "castle" and other people in the home from violent attack or an intrusion which may lead to violent attack.

"It'll be a difficult bill to get out (of committee)," said Christensen, "even though it's a common sense bill—you should be able to defend your own home and not have to run away. I believe in it."

- LB512 would change provisions relating to mental health determinations regarding the possession and purchase of handguns.

- LB518 would change certain penalty and violation provisions of the Concealed Handgun Permit Act.

On Friday, Christensen will introduce LB513, known as the human trafficking bill, to the Judiciary Committee.

Christensen said I-80 is the main human trafficking highway in the U.S.

"Our law is weak—I'm trying to strengthen it," he said.

Christensen wants to step up enforcement and penalties for anyone forcing someone into sexual acts for their own gain.

"It's eye opening to think it's (trafficking) happening in this state."

### **Amendment to LB94**

Christensen got language amended in LB94 so Health and Human Services can't withhold information on a child from foster parents.

"I don't trust HHS," said Christensen.

The amendment would refer to state statutes and regulations as well as federal rules and federal regulations to make it clear that the HHS department can't withhold information.

The senator has been in touch with staff from another state who say their HHS department was in the same financial shape 10 years ago. Christensen said those people are willing to assist Nebraska senators via conference calls with some ideas in making budget cuts in our own state.

Christensen is hoping to get some senators on board to formulate a plan of attack for restructuring the HHS system via a new website to be launched in a couple weeks. He said the system won't change as long as the top personnel are in place.

In order to try to bring forth meaningful legislation a year from now, it will be necessary to get rid of these top people, said Christensen.

"I'm seen in Omaha as a senator willing to tackle the issue," he said. "If we can make some meaningful changes to help the state out it would be a great thing."

*Senator MARK CHRISTENSEN holds weekly teleconferences at 7 a.m. MT/8 a.m. CT each Tuesday morning. The public is invited to attend the conference calls. Hosts of the conference calls are Southwest Public Power District in Palisade and Midwest Electric in Grant. Christensen can be reached at 402-471-2805, or by mail at P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509, or via e-mail at [mchristensen@leg.ne.gov](mailto:mchristensen@leg.ne.gov).*