Telephone conference report held on Tuesday, March 12.

By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

The Nebraska Legislature resumed session Tuesday with further discussion on a resolution and bill dealing with wagering on historic horse races.

During his weekly teleconference, Sen. Mark Christen-sen of Imperial said it's possible discussion could last the rest of the week.

Debate resumed Tuesday morning on LR 41CA, a resolution to put the question of legalizing gambling on historic horse races on the 2014 ballot in the form of a constitutional amendment.

Right behind LR 41CA on the agenda is LB 590, a bill that would allow the Legislature to license and regulate wagering on historic horse racing.

Christensen said he's opposed to both measures.

Christensen said debate on both issues could take up the rest of the week's floor debate, with each issue allotted eight hours. Presently, the body is only on the floor in the mornings with hearings in the afternoon.

A similar measure garnered significant support last year, passing with 30 votes, Christensen said.

However the governor vetoed it and the override attempt got only 29 votes.

However, Christensen said he doesn't see that kind of support this year. He noted Sen. Chambers is also against the bill so it could face a tough road.

Sen. Lautenbaugh introduced both items. He said if the resolution passes, he will pull LB 590. If this happens, Christensen said that would save eight hours of floor debate on the issue.

Christensen said the vendor had a sample of the betting machine at the capitol. The vendor told him the machine could accommodate any kind of gambling but was configured especially for the historic horse racing.

Priority Bills Due This Week

Christensen said priority bills chosen by the speaker and senators are due this week.

The speaker must select his by Thursday, March 14, with senators declaring their priority bills by Friday, March 15.

Christensen said he's still uncertain as to what bill he will prioritize.

Without a prioritization by either the speaker or a senator, a bill has little chance of getting on the agenda later in the session.

Christensen has 14 bills pending that he could prioritize. He has already pulled two more bills and another has been indefinitely postponed, which effectively kills the bill.

One bill he says that won't be under consideration will be LB 522, which would provide state financial assistance to surface water irrigators in a compact call year when the districts aren't allowed to store any streamflow.

Christensen has filed a conflict of interest statement on the bill because his father and brother both have surface water allocations and will see their surface water deliveries decrease significantly.

He said because of that, he will not prioritize the bill. However, he said it's possible that some other senator may see it as important enough legislation to make it their priority bill.

Senator MARK CHRISTENSEN holds weekly teleconferences at 7 a.m. MT/8 a.m. CT each

Tuesday morning. The public is invited. Hosts of the conference calls are Imperial Republican in Imperial, Southwest Public Power District in Palisade and Midwest Electric in Grant.
Christensen can be reached at 402-471-2805.