

Full-day floor debate begins next week.

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

During his weekly teleconference call Tuesday, 44th District Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial said things are moving at a snail's pace in the Legislature.

He places much of the responsibility for that on Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha.

When Chambers doesn't like a bill, he tacks on enough amendments to a bill to insure that debate lasts for the full eight hours before a vote to end debate and act on the bill can occur.

This week, Chambers didn't like LB 613 from Sen. Paul Schumacher of Columbus.

LB 613 would establish the Tax Modernization Commission, whose purpose is to continually review and recommend updates to Nebraska's tax code in response to changing economies.

On Tuesday, Christensen said another four hours of floor debate would have to occur before any action could be taken.

He said that Chambers has already conceded that the bill will likely move forward but seems to want to drag it out as much as possible.

Christensen said that if Chambers continues with these tactics for the remainder of the session, a lot of bills won't get heard.

In addition to the 49 priority bills from senators, there's another 25 priority bills from the speaker and that doesn't include committee priority bills.

Christensen said the speaker has already indicated that he doubts they will get through all of the senators' 49 priority bills.

Full-day Debate Next Week

One thing that will make a difference in the progress, Christensen said, will be the start of full-day debate on the Legislature floor next week.

Thus far, the body has only met in the mornings with committee meetings in the afternoons.

This marks the final week for committee hearings.

Christensen said he has two bills scheduled for hearing this week, LB 335 and LB 352. Both are gun-related bills.

LB 335 would allow gun owners to store a gun in a vehicle parked in a public parking lot.

The gun must be out of sight, either in the vehicle or the trunk, and the vehicle or trunk must be locked.

Christensen said he doesn't believe Second Amendment gun rights should be infringed in a personal vehicle.

LB 352 would require any entity that prohibits concealed weapons to properly post notice.

This is to protect a gun owner with a concealed-carry permit who may not otherwise know a concealed weapon is not allowed into a specific building.

As originally proposed, the sign posted at entryways was to be 8.5 x 11 inches. However, Christensen said committee members became "unglued" at the size being that large.

The bill was amended in committee, requiring the sign to be at least 3 x 5 inches in size.

He noted his bill on human trafficking, LB 314, will be rolled into LB 255, a speaker priority bill introduced by Sen. Amanda McGill.

Her bill targets human sex trafficking of children. LB 314 addresses escort services and permitting of those businesses, which are known for connections to prostitution and other

criminal activity.