

JCRC Omaha,

This week, the Legislature began all day debate focusing on Senator and Committee priority bills. On Monday, the Legislature debated LB246 (DeKay at the request of the Governor – Agriculture Committee Priority Bill) which would prohibit lab grown meat in Nebraska. LB246 was passed from General File to Select File with a vote of 33-4. Tuesday saw another lengthy debate and filibuster of legislation that would modify the implementation of a ballot measure. LB258 (Raybould – Raybould Priority) would set a ceiling for annual minimum wage increases at 1.5% and would set the minimum for youth wages and youth training wages at \$13.50 an hour. Senator Raybould successfully invoked cloture 33-16 and passed the bill onto Select File 32-17. Several priority bills were advanced from General File to Select File on Wednesday, including: LB646 (Ibach – Ibach Priority) to exempt feedlots under the Livestock Brand Act; LB380 (Frederickson – Frederickson Priority) to provide Medicaid contractor and DHHS monitoring requirements involving mental health and substance abuse disorder services; LB323 (Moser – Moser Priority) to change bidding processes and requirements for NDOT contracts; LB192 (Quick – J. Cavanaugh Priority) to remove a sunset date for expanded SNAP; LB332 (Hardin – HHS Priority) to expand Medicaid coverage to psychology services provided advanced level practitioners; and LB317 (Brandt at the request of the Governor – Natural Resources Priority) to merge the Department of Natural Resources with the Department of Environment and Energy.

On Thursday, the Legislature returned to Final Reading to pass various bills to the Governor's desk including: LB144 (Rountree) to provide clarity and expanding veteran preferences in employment; LB168 (Hardin) to prohibit the restriction of the acquisition of 340B prescription drugs; LB294 (Storer) to allow for greater flexibility in awarding grants from County Visitors Improvement Funds; and LB527 (Jacobson) to enact a tax on non-Medicare premiums from Health Maintenance Organizations. The Legislature also continued General File priority bill debate, including on LB526 (Jacobson – Jacobson Priority) to create an excise tax on cryptocurrency mining operations and to allow public power districts to require miners to pay for power infrastructure upgrades and LB48 (McKinney – McKinney Priority) to create a family resource and juvenile assessment center pilot program. LB526 was passed from General File to Select File 35-0. LB48 initially failed to advance 22-14, but was amended into LB382 (Meyer – Meyer Priority) and advanced to Select File 37-2.

Next week, the Legislature will return to session on Tuesday. In the morning, the Legislature will debate confirmation reports for appointments in HHS, Business and Labor, Natural Resources, Government, and General Affairs committees. Included in these appointments are positions on the Nebraska Rural Health Advisory Commission, State Board of Health, Health Information Technology Board, and the Commissioner of

the Department of Labor. Following confirmation reports, the Legislature will take up bills on Select File, including: LB140 (Sanders at the Request of the Governor) to mandate school districts adopt a policy for electronic communication devices; and LB504 (Bosn at the request of the Governor) to mandate age-appropriate online designs for youth. At no later than 1:30 p.m., the Legislature will begin debate on LB3 (Lippincott at the request of the Governor) to change Nebraska's presidential electors to a winner-take-all system. For timeliness, Speaker Arch indicated that the bill would reach cloture at four hours of debate. As the Legislature works on more complex and controversial issues later in the session, Speaker Arch has designated numerous session days in late April and in May for late night debates. Some late nights may be reserved for budget debate, which must be passed by the eightieth day of session (May 15th).

Best,

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