

# Nebraska Groups Rally To Oppose Plan To Cut Taxes

BY MICHAEL AVOK  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Gov. Dave Heineman’s tax cut plans would hurt Nebraska counties and result in increased property taxes to make up for the lost revenue, a coalition of county officials, educators and child advocates said Tuesday.

The governor has proposed a \$327 million tax cut that includes the elimination of the inheritance tax and cuts to corporate and individual income taxes. Heineman has said his plan provides \$274 million in relief for individuals and \$53 million for businesses.

But eight groups gathering at the Capitol on Tuesday called the plan irresponsible, saying it would force deep spending cuts that ultimately would be shouldered by public schools and local governments, prompting them to raise

local property taxes.

Lancaster County, for example, would lose \$6 million a year in revenue from the elimination of the inheritance tax, which is assessed to when property or other assets get turned over heirs following the owner’s death. That would affect the ability of the county to provide adequate public services to its residents, said Deb Schorr, chairwoman of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners.

“If the inheritance tax is eliminated, every taxpayer in Lancaster County will pay,” she said, adding that the governor’s plan would “result in a direct shift to the property tax.”

Another misconception is that the inheritance tax discourages businesses from locating in Nebraska, she said.

“The inheritance tax is paid by individuals, not companies,” she said. “It is more important to businesses to locate

in a stable community with adequate infrastructure, a low crime rate, and an effective social safety net - all of which are jeopardized by LB970.”

Many of those at the Tuesday press conference already have weighed in against the governor’s tax cuts during committee hearings late last month. The governor unveiled his plan during his State of the State address.

Heineman said Nebraska’s income tax system is unfair to middle-class families, and that the state could afford to provide some tax relief.

Targeting income and corporate tax rates and repealing the final leg of the inheritance tax, the governor said, would help hard-working, middle-class Nebraskans and small businesses, while continuing to make Nebraska more competitive for high-quality jobs.

“These liberal interest groups sup-

port higher taxes on middle class Nebraskans,” Heineman said Tuesday.

“They want to increase government spending while I want to lower taxes for Nebraskans.

“As I have said repeatedly, the choice is between providing tax relief for hard-working, middle class taxpayers or more spending for special interest groups. I will continue to fight for the taxpayers.”

The groups against the cuts said the governor’s plan would actually hurt those middle-class taxpayers.

Brian Depew, the assistant director of the Center for Rural Affairs, said the cuts are especially risky for rural Nebraska, where counties, towns, schools and health programs have already lost critical state funding.

“The pain would be shared widely, but the benefits would not. Less than one of every six dollars of tax cuts

would go to the 60 percent of Nebraskans who account for the heart of the middle class and everyone with less,” Depew said Tuesday.

Carolyn Rooker, executive director for Voices for Children in Nebraska, said children are facing “incredible odds” that the tax cuts would only make worse.

“Child poverty is at its highest point in a decade,” she said. “We need investments in our children more than we need tax cuts.”

Rooker said the governor’s tax cuts would amount to “a gallon and a half of milk” for the average taxpayer.

Other groups opposing the tax-cut package include the AARP, Nebraska Appleseed, Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska Association of County Officials, Nebraska State Education Association, and the Open Sky Policy Institute.

## Nebraska Bill Would Promote Healthy Food Choices

BY MICHAEL AVOK  
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — More farmers’ markets and local food programs are needed to provide better food choices for low-income Nebraskans, an Omaha senator said Tuesday.

Sen. Brenda Council told the Agriculture Committee that she wants to start the Nebraska Healthy Food Financing Initiative Act. She proposed a bill that would create a \$300,000 fund to promote and expand access to nutritious foods.

Money from the fund would be used to offer grants and loans to individuals and businesses to build, renovate or expand grocery

stores in areas considered to be “food deserts,” places in rural and urban Nebraska where access to healthy and affordable food is limited.

“We must as a state acknowledge the existence of food deserts in Nebraska,” Council said. “This bill will ensure access to healthy and affordable foods across the state.”

Council’s bill would help establish farmers’ markets, food consumer cooperatives, community gardening projects and distribution projects that enable food retailers in underserved communities to regularly obtain fresh produce.

She said the program will help lower health care costs, create

jobs, revitalize distressed communities and open new markets for farmers.

John Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union, said the bill accomplishes a lot of what his group believes is important in helping to fight poverty.

“There is a need out there, even in the very heart of agricultural communities,” Hansen said. “This bill helps meet what we know as a real need in rural and urban communities.”

Council attempted to get the healthy foods bill passed last year. The Legislature approved it, but Gov. Dave Heineman vetoed it.

Heineman said at the time that the federal government already offered 19 programs that address

access to healthy foods. In addition, he said assistance also was available through the Farmers Market Promotion Program, the Nebraska Cooperative Development Center and other sources.

His veto stuck after lawmakers couldn’t muster the 30 votes needed to override the governor’s decision.

Council told the Agriculture Committee on Tuesday that there are some federal funds available to help people buy food, but recipients may not have the stores and shops in their neighborhoods to use the aid.

“They still may find themselves in a food desert and not have access to affordable food,” Council said.

## South Dakota House Approves Long-Term Planning Committee

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota House on Monday approved a proposal to set up a new legislative planning committee that supporters argue would improve the Legislature’s ability to compete with the governor in setting state policy.

The House voted 51-18 to pass a measure that would create the Legislature’s Planning Committee to study and propose long-term plans for education and other key issues. The bill next goes to the Senate.

Supporters said the part-time Legislature is now at a disadvantage to Gov. Dennis Daugaard and his full-time employees in the executive branch. The proposed planning committee could give lawmakers a bigger role in setting policy and finding solutions to the state’s biggest problems, they said.

“This is a planning committee that helps us be better legislators, and to give us some

insights into what will go on in the future for South Dakota,” said Rep. Peggy Gibson, D-Huron.

But opponents said they fear the proposed committee is a power grab by legislative leaders who would use it to drown out the voices of rank-and-file lawmakers.

“We don’t need to have a standing supercommittee made up of the upper echelon,” said Rep. Lance Russell, R-Hot Springs.

The bill would create a planning committee that includes the speaker of the House, the president pro tem of the Senate and the chair of the Executive Board, an existing panel that handles management issues for the Legislature. The Executive Board would pick another seven members of the planning committee. The final member of the panel would be a member of the Legislature’s Joint Appropriations Committee.

## Scotland

From Page 1

dent achievement? Is it saving money? What exactly is your motivation?” Alvey said.

“Our board didn’t have one strong motivation. If it saves us money, great. But we’re not going into it for just that reason. And when it comes to student achievement, we would love to find ways to improve our students’ achievement. But we weren’t totally convinced that a four-day week would show us that improvement.”

The school board and administrators were also concerned

that pursuing the four-day week would drain the district’s resources and focus from other needs, Alvey said.

“The board’s feeling was, ‘Let’s put this on the back burner for a while and get working on the other things that we have under consideration,’” he said. “Those are things like the auxiliary gym project, student achievement and any legislative issues that may come up.”

At the present time, the school gym provides the only facility in Scotland to house larger school and community functions, Alvey said. An auxiliary gym would dovetail well with a four-day school week, but those are two entirely separate issues, he said.

The district will continue

work on the auxiliary gym and its possible location, Alvey said. The board is considering a public meeting in late March to provide information on usage and funding issues, he said.

Public feedback on the auxiliary gym has ranged so far from those who want to move forward with it to those concerned about higher taxes to those who question whether the facility is necessary, the superintendent said.

While put on hold for now, the four-day week remains an option for further study, Alvey said. The district already has the information and input gathered from its own staff, daycare providers in town, and many of the school districts that operate on a four-day week, he said.

“This isn’t wasted informa-

tion. We gained a good, valuable database from this. Every month, we put together other pieces of the puzzle,” he said. “We have already made good contacts with area schools and others across the state. We feel really comfortable calling them back and asking for updates or other information if needed.”

In the case of both the four-day week and auxiliary gym, Scotland school officials are going to take the time to gather facts and aren’t going to make any rushed decisions, Alvey said.

“It’s never a wasted opportunity to learn,” he said. “Any chance we have to investigate and explore to make this a better school district, we want to do that.”

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- 1 Fancy dance
- 5 Took on, as work
- 11 Lotion ingredient
- 12 Maine park
- 13 Small amphibian
- 14 Email field
- 15 Boxer Norton
- 16 Ailing
- 17 City on the Mohawk River
- 19 Fireplace sight
- 22 High points
- 24 Inquiry
- 26 Lounge attire
- 27 Tiny bit
- 28 Coat of arms
- 30 De Mille of dance
- 31 That woman
- 32 Parting word
- 34 Stratum
- 35 Spoil type
- 38 Folder type
- 41 Skilled
- 42 Arthurian island
- 43 Rose of baseball
- 44 Official documents
- 45 Walked over

### DOWN

- 1 Vault setting
- 2 Out of the wind
- 3 One or two
- 4 Charter
- 5 Elementary
- 6 Pole feature
- 7 Refinery sight
- 8 Unmatched
- 9 “For shame!”
- 10 Way off
- 16 Bro’s sib
- 18 Casual tops
- 19 Auction catalog identifier

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### Yesterday’s answer

- 20 Soprano instrument
- 21 Tiara adorners
- 22 Vault part
- 23 Center book feature
- 25 Latest fad
- 29 Suit expert
- 30 Melody of movies
- 33 College heads
- 34 Floor piece
- 36 Choir member
- 37 Bassoon part
- 38 Guide-book feature
- 39 Gardner of movies
- 40 Siesta
- 41 Gifted

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2-15

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L’s, X for the two O’s, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

### 2-15 CRYPTOQUOTE


N U ’ O M F U U G R T F U N M I

U G H U ’ O Y R Z F D P H D B , N U ’ O


U G R D F C M U N M I . — U F Z

O U F V V H P Y  
Yesterday’s Cryptquote: A KISS IS A ROSY DOT OVER THE “I” OF LOVING. — CYRANO DE BERGERAC

# WELCOMING TWO NEW RADIOLOGISTS



Angeline Young, MD, FRCP




Ralph Tullo, MD


At Avera Sacred Heart Radiology, we’re proud to welcome two new doctors to our department. Drs. Angeline Young and Ralph Tullo will be joining Dr. Gregory Taylor to provide top-notch radiology services to patients at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital.

Both Dr. Young and Dr. Tullo have years of experience with radiology and are looking forward to working with the well-rounded team at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital.

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Gregory Taylor, MD



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