

## Bills To Bring Workers To State Passes House

PIERRE (AP) — South Dakota's House has passed two bills in an effort to help end the shortage of medical professionals in rural counties.

One bill allows doctors or dentists who work at a rural facility for three years to get reimbursed for double the cost of attending the University of South Dakota School of Medicine for four years.

The measure expands eligibility to physicians in fields like pediatrics and gynecology. Physician assistants, nurse practitioners and midwives could also apply. They'd get twice the resident tuition for three years of study.

The second bill gives \$10,000 to professionals like dietitians to paramedics who commit to three years.

Facilities cover some of the bonuses and the state pays after participants complete the three-year job.

The bills go next to the Governor's desk.

## ND Supreme Court Sets UND Deadline

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota's Supreme Court has set a March 2 deadline for responses in a lawsuit over the state's Fighting Sioux nickname law.

The Board of Higher Education is challenging a law that says the University of North Dakota's sports teams have to be known as the Fighting Sioux.

The board wants the Supreme Court to say the law is unconstitutional. It wants the court to block a June referendum vote on the law.

The court has set a March 2 deadline for responses to the board's lawsuit. The justices have also asked the referendum's sponsoring committee if it wants to respond to the lawsuit. Minot attorney Reed Soderstrom is chairman of the committee.

Secretary of State Al Jaeger is the defendant in the lawsuit.

## Memorial Service Set For 4 NDSU Students

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Students and staff at North Dakota State University will gather Thursday to remember four freshmen killed in a car crash in Minnesota while heading back to campus.

A release from NDSU says a campus memorial service is scheduled for 9 p.m. in the Memorial Union Ballroom to remember the four students: 18-year-olds Lauren Peterson, of Prior Lake, Minn.; Megan Sample of Rogers, Minn.; Danielle Renninger of Excelsior, Minn.; and 19-year-old Jordann Playle of Elk River, Minn. A candlelight vigil will be held outside at 10 p.m.

The Minnesota State Patrol says the teens' car crossed the median of Interstate 94 near Alexandria Monday afternoon and was struck by an SUV, which was hit by a third vehicle.

## Neb. Lawmakers To Tackle Insurance Bill

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Insurance companies that cover cancer would have to treat chemotherapy pills the same as medication administered through an IV, under a bill set for a vote in the Nebraska Legislature.

The measure (LB882) by Omaha Sen. Jeremy Nordquist would require insurance companies to treat oral chemotherapy drugs the same as intravenous chemotherapy.

Nordquist says the problem for patients stems from how companies classify the treatments. Insurance policies usually cover the cost of IV chemotherapy as a medical benefit, while oral medications are viewed as prescription drug benefits with much larger copayments.

The bill has drawn support from the American Cancer Society and other health advocates, but insurance industry officials say such proposals would combine over time to increase costs for small businesses and the self-employed.

## Man Falls Through Ice On Missouri River, Dies

PIERRE (AP) — A Pierre man drowned after falling through the ice on the Missouri River while apparently trying to rescue his dog near a campground area east of the city.

Hughes County Sheriff Mike Leidholt says 66-year-old Carl Remmers was pronounced dead about 6:45 p.m. Tuesday at a Pierre hospital.

Authorities believe Remmers was underneath the water for more than an hour before being pulled out by divers.

The dog was rescued and taken to a veterinarian. Dr. Craig Howard tells KCCR radio that the dog was treated for hypothermia and is doing fine.

# S.D. Senate Panel Approves Abortion-Law Modifications

BY CHET BROKAW  
Associated Press

PIERRE — South Dakota's year-old abortion law remains tied up in a court challenge, but a state Senate committee endorsed a bill Wednesday that would change some of its counseling requirements for women seeking an abortion.

The bill leaves intact the current law's requirements that women seeking abortions wait 72 hours and undergo counseling at pregnancy help centers that discourage abortions. But it changes provisions dealing with a woman's first consultation with a doctor at an abortion clinic and requires that counselors at the pregnancy help centers be licensed.

The Senate Health Committee voted 6-1 to approve the bill, which has already passed in the House. The measure next goes to the full Senate.

The bill's main sponsor, Rep. Roger Hunt, R-Brandon, said he does not know whether the measure will help the state defend the law against a court challenge. Planned Parenthood, which operates South Dakota's only abortion clinic in Sioux Falls, argues the 2011 law is an unconstitutional burden on a woman's right to an abortion. A federal judge has suspended most of the law from taking effect until the court challenge is decided.

"You never know really what's

going to happen in litigation," Hunt told the Senate Committee.

However, South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley has said the bill might have an effect on the federal court lawsuit.

"It has the potential to assist in some of the concerns expressed by the federal court in the 2011 litigation," Jackley said recently.

Last year, U.S. District Judge Karen Schreier suspended most provisions of the law from taking effect after ruling that Planned Parenthood had demonstrated that the law was likely unconstitutional.

"Forcing a woman to divulge to a stranger at a pregnancy help center the fact that she has chosen to undergo an abortion humiliates and degrades her as a human being," the judge wrote.

The bill that's in the Senate would specify what factors an abortion clinic doctor would consider when determining if a woman is at risk of developing mental health problems if she has an abortion. The measure also would require that the counseling sessions at pregnancy help centers be conducted by counselors, doctors, nurses and others who are licensed in their fields. That counseling is supposed to determine if a woman has been coerced into seeking an abortion.

Hunt said the bill merely cleans up language in last year's law and

clarifies the Legislature's intent in passing the law.

Supporters of the bill said women seeking abortions need a chance to talk to counselors who can help them overcome pressure by parents, boyfriends or husbands who are urging them to get abortions. A counselor can explain alternatives, such as keeping the child or giving it up for adoption, they said.

But Sen. Jim Bradford, D-Pine Ridge, said he opposes both the law and the proposed changes because it interferes with a woman's right to make her own decisions. He also said the Legislature should not be modifying the abortion law until the court challenge is decided.

Sen. Jean Hunhoff, R-Yankton, said the bill would make sure women get better information before they seek abortions.

"I don't think it's taking away the decision-making. It's actually enhancing that," Hunhoff said.

The law passed last year required a doctor at an abortion clinic to discuss with a woman any factors that medical journals have identified that could cause a woman to have psychological problems after having an abortion. The bill lists specific risk factors, such as coercion, a woman's age, her previous mental health problems and her religious views.

## Measure Aims To Redefine Gun Owners' Rights

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Gun owners who legally transport and store weapons in their vehicles would have better-defined property rights under a measure debated Wednesday in the Legislature's Judiciary Committee.

Legislative Bill 785 would provide clearer guidelines for the transportation and storage of firearms in vehicles in publicly accessible parking lots — common lots provided for both employees and customers — throughout the state.

Sen. Mark Christensen of Imperial said many gun owners face inconsistent rules and actions by their employers. He and other bill supporters said people should be allowed to have permitted handguns and hunting guns carefully locked and stored in their vehicles and not be subjected to employer weapons bans.

Christensen also said his bill balances private property rights and the right to bear arms for law-abiding citizens.

Sen. Brenda Council of Omaha quizzed supporters Wednesday on the broad language of the bill and its potential impact of workplace violence.

"This is bill is not a balance," Council said. "It places the gun owner's rights above the property owner's."

Supporters said that if the bill passed, gun owner rights would indeed supersede the rights of an employer to ban weapons from a common parking lot.

Ron Jensen, lobbyist for the National Rifle Association, said most people who have weapons use them responsibly, and that most incidents of workplace violence do not involve someone retrieving a gun from his or her car.

"Those incidents get a lot of attention, but it's a small percentage of homicides," Jensen said. "If we prohibit having a gun in a vehicle, we detract from its usefulness in protection."

"I think what I have in my car is my business. It's my property," Jensen said.

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Regular Session \$16 Pays \$50,  
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\$20 Pays \$75, \$10 X-tra Packet,  
Warm-Ups 6PM, Reg. Session 6:30pm  
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