

Bill Urging Campaign Finance Reports Nixed

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota House has killed a bill that would bar a candidate for public office who failed to file campaign finance reports from running in a later election. Rep. Jon Hansen from Dell Rapids is the main sponsor of the bill. He says an amendment to the bill needs more studying. He says, "Rather than rush this through, I think it would be wise to take a year to make sure we get everything right." The House voted 65 to 4 against the bill. Candidates who don't file campaign finance reports, which include information on donations and campaign spending, already face administrative fines of \$50 a day — up to a maximum of \$3,000. The State Affairs Committee passed the bill 9 to 4 last week.

Nebraska Deputy Reported Injured In Wreck

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a Douglas County sheriff's deputy has been injured in a car accident while responding to a call west of Omaha. KETV-TV in Omaha says Chief Deputy Marty Bilek says the deputy was responding to a home invasion on Monday when the deputy's car collided with another car at an intersection. Bilek says the deputy was taken to a hospital with head and arm injuries. The deputy's name was not immediately released. There was no word on the condition of the other driver.

Man Pleads Not Guilty To South S.C. Killing

SOUTH SIOUX CITY, Neb. (AP) — A South Sioux City man accused of killing his girlfriend has pleaded not guilty to second-degree murder. Fifty-three-year-old John Baker is charged in the death of 47-year-old Kelly Alspach. Baker pleaded not guilty on Monday in Dakota County District Court. A judge scheduled a pretrial conference for Feb. 28. Alspach's body was found on Oct. 21 stuffed in a window seat in their home. An autopsy showed she died from a blow to the head and asphyxia. Baker was arrested on Oct. 24 at a relative's house in Garrison, N.D. He was ordered back to Nebraska in December.

Protesters Seek Way To Stay At Lincoln Spot

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Occupy protesters want to remain at Centennial Mall in Lincoln. The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports the protesters have sent a message to the city, saying they do not intend to prevent renovation work from beginning. But, they say, their work at the mall "is not yet ready to end." The group says it hopes to work with city officials on finding a way to stay. The city has set a March 1 deadline for the protesters to remove their encampment so the city can use the area as a staging site for contractors working on the mall. The Occupy movement began in New York, decrying what protesters see as corporate greed and the growing gap between rich and poor.

No Headstone Problems At S.D. Cemeteries

RAPID CITY (AP) — An audit by the Department of Veterans Affairs found no incorrectly placed headstones at the three national cemeteries in western South Dakota's Black Hills. The VA reviewed dozens of cemeteries across the country last year after an internal Army investigation found more than 200 unmarked or misidentified graves at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Problems were found at cemeteries in half a dozen states. The *Rapid City Journal* reports that an audit late last year found no problems at the Black Hills, Fort Meade and Hot Springs national cemeteries. The director for the cemeteries, Bill Haggerty, says it took about 40 hours to do the inspection.

Woman Fatally Injured In Columbus rollover

COLUMBUS, Neb. (AP) — A 19-year-old woman was fatally injured in a rollover accident in Columbus. The *Columbus Telegram* reports the accident occurred around 2:30 a.m. Saturday. The dead woman was identified as Candace Randall-Stewart. Two other passengers in the vehicle were taken to Columbus Community Hospital for treatment. The driver was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence. Authorities haven't released his name or the names of the two other injured passengers.

House Panel Nixes Change In S.D. Redistricting Method

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota House committee has killed a proposal that would have changed the way the boundaries of legislative districts are redrawn every 10 years. The Legislature now meets in a special session every decade to draw new district boundaries to reflect population changes reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. The defeated proposal would have required the appointment of a seven-member commission representing both political parties to create new districts. The measure's main sponsor, Democratic Rep. Peggy Gibson of Huron, says the present system is flawed because incumbent lawmakers protect themselves and their party when they redraw the legislative districts.

But the proposal was defeated mostly along party lines when Republican committee members said it violates a constitutional provision that requires the legislature to redraw the boundaries of legislative districts.

South Dakota

Bible Study Bill OK'd In Senate

Non-Binding Measure Would Encourage Schools To Provide Academic Bible Instruction

BY CHET BROKAW
Associated Press

PIERRE — A measure encouraging South Dakota schools to provide academic instruction on the Bible won final approval Monday from the state Legislature amid criticism from some lawmakers that it could blur the line between government and religion. The Senate voted 25-10 to pass the non-binding resolution, which has no force of law. The House passed the measure last week. Sen. Elizabeth Kraus, R-Rapid City, said students need to learn about the Bible because it permeates culture, laws and literature. Many young people know very little about the Bible, and schools can provide instruction on it without promoting religion, she said. "The Bible is alone in terms of its influence on western civilization," she said. But Sen. Tom Hansen, R-Huron, said he opposes the measure because it could get government involved in religious issues. "I kind of follow the philosophy it's up to the state to regulate state things and it's up to the church to regulate church things," Hansen said. The measure encourages school districts to provide instruction that makes students fa-

miliar with the content, character and narratives of the Bible. It says the instruction also should make students aware of the role the Bible has played in the development of literature, art, culture and public discourse. In addition, the measure says the state Board of Education should include support of instruction about the Bible in its curriculum planning and should identify textbooks and other sources that outline how to teach about the Bible without violating the First Amendment guarantee of separation of church and state. The resolution says national education groups, including the National School Boards Association, have agreed that the Bible can be taught in public schools as long as the teaching is academic, does not press students to accept religion, does not ask students to conform to any religious belief and does not encourage or discourage any religious views. No committee hearings were held on the measure in the House or Senate. Instead, House and Senate members voted on the resolution after brief debates in each chamber. Robert Doody, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, said the measure's passage was unfortunate because it does not take into account

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SEN. TOM HANSEN

many other diverse religious texts that should be studied by students. "Although the current Christian Bible is an important text within the western canon, it is not the only important work, and the passage of a bill that only specifies the Christian Bible makes it look as if the real interest is in proselytizing students and not in providing for a comprehensive education in classical texts," Doody said. But Sen. Bruce Rempelberg, R-Rapid City, said the Bible is a book of history with proven instructions for living. "This bill is hardly even a good start in taking back the heritage of our country," Rempelberg said during the Senate debate. Senate Democratic Leader Jason Frerichs of Wilmot said he listens to religious devotions while driving across South Dakota, but he worries that the measure does not protect teachers who might run into trouble for teaching about the Bible.

Nebraska Measure Would Let Lawmakers Legalize Gambling

BY GRANT SCHULTE
Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska could gain millions of dollars in gambling tax revenue that is now going to Iowa and South Dakota, under a proposal that would allow for casinos if the states don't share their money, a state senator said Monday. Columbus Sen. Paul Schumacher told the Legislature's General Affairs Committee that his measure would help Nebraska cover the cost of education programs and roads. But gambling opponents said the measure was a ploy to black-mail border states and circumvent the voters who rejected legalized casino gambling when the issue appeared on ballots in 2004. The amendment proposal would give the Legislature the authority to legalize casino gambling, which is currently banned in the state constitution. If approved, the measure would allow Nebraska to build casinos within 60 miles of a border state — unless the border state agreed to share some of the tax revenue. The idea faces long odds, because Nebraskans have rejected several gambling proposals over the past decade. Lawmakers took no action on the proposal Monday. Gambling opponents said the economic benefits of casinos are overblown, given the cost of regulating such businesses as well as the likely increases in embezzlement and other crimes related to gambling addictions. Hannah Buell, a representative

for the Nebraska Family Council, said handing the decision-making power to lawmakers would make it easier for lawmakers to legalize gambling, and disregard the majority of voters who rejected a gambling proposal in 2004. Loretta Fairchild, an economist at Nebraska Wesleyan University, said legalized gambling typically benefits casino owners but saddles states with the cost of regulating the industry and dealing with social problems that stem from gambling addictions. Schumacher said three casinos within a 60-mile radius of downtown Omaha collect a combined \$428 million a year in revenue. About \$321 million of the revenue comes from Nebraska gamblers, according to state data, and Iowa collects \$93 million a year in tax revenue. "That's a real nice subsidy to Iowa," Schumacher said. "Build a few roads, fix some potholes, educate a few kids, string some fiber-optic cables, and make them a very attractive in competition with Nebraska for some of the big industries emerging in the future." The proposed constitutional amendment would require voter approval before lawmakers could allow gambling. Seventy-five percent of Nebraska's revenue would go to state education needs, 24 percent would funnel into roads, and

1 percent would help finance treatment for compulsive gamblers. Groups that oppose expanded gambling in the state have argued successfully that the social costs of gambling outweigh any tax revenue benefit. The nonprofit group Gambling with the Good Life led opposition to a number of gambling measures because of concerns that increased gambling would bring increased crime, gambling addiction and other social ills. Nebraska does allow keno, horse racing and a lottery, but the state has resisted video gaming machines and casinos. In 2006, Nebraskans voted down a plan to allow video keno. And in 2004, they voted down two proposals to allow casino gambling — one touted by Las Vegas casino interests, the other by the Legislature. Schumacher said the casinos were in place to "poach Nebraska's resources" and further Iowa's needs. "In sound numbers, the real money from that whole \$321 million in Nebraska losses goes to Iowa for them to be competitive with us and do good things in Iowa," Schumacher said. The amendment is LR 375CA

S.D. Panel Rejects Single-Member House Districts

PIERRE (AP) — A South Dakota House panel has rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that sought to divide all legislative districts into two separate House districts that would each elect its own representative. All districts but two now elect one member of the Senate and two members of the House who represent the entire district. The main sponsor of the proposal, Democratic Rep. Peggy Gibson of Huron, says each Senate district should be divided into separate House districts so representatives would live closer to their constituents. She says voters now are confused when they have to vote for two House members. The measure was defeated mostly along party lines when Republican lawmakers said they see no need to change the current system.

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