

Neb. Bill Would Require Copay From Inmates

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Nebraska prisoners and jail inmates would have to provide a \$10 copayment for non-emergency health care each time they request it, under a new bill in the Legislature.

Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill proposed a measure Wednesday that would require county jails to deduct the payment from inmates' personal accounts. Inmates who have less than \$10 would lose half of each new deposit until the payment was covered.

Larson says he was approached by a county sheriff in his district who complained that inmate requests for health care were pulling deputies away from their regular duties. He says 37 other states require co-payments from inmates, including Iowa, South Dakota and Kansas.

The bill includes exceptions for emergency care, mental health or substance abuse treatments, and treatment of a chronic illness.

Heineman Recommends \$2.2M for airplane

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Gov. Dave Heineman is recommending that Nebraska buy a 12-year-old airplane for \$2.2 million to replace another aircraft in its fleet.

Heineman's budget proposal to lawmakers includes a request from the state Department of Aeronautics for a new back-up plane, which serves as transportation for the governor, agency heads and other officials in state government.

The department says the new plane would replace a 1982 Piper Cheyenne aircraft that is no longer manufactured. Agency officials say parts are becoming increasingly difficult to find, keeping the plane grounded for longer stretches of time.

The department estimates that the old plane's engines would have to be replaced every 5 to 7 years, at a projected cost of \$500,000. The old plane at that time would be worth an estimated \$180,000.

S.D. Man Pleads Not Guilty In Sex Crime Case

HURON (AP) — A former Beadle County janitor indicted last September on two counts of sexual contact with a child under the age of 16 has pleaded not guilty.

KOKK reports that the trial for Fred Sylaat is set for March 6 in Beadle County.

His 18-year-old son, Jordan Sylaat, is charged with two counts of first-degree rape.

Prosecutors say the alleged incidents involved girls under the age of 12 who attended a day care ran by Fred Sylaat's wife. The day care is currently closed.

Former Brown County States Attorney Kimberly Dorsett is acting as special prosecutor in the case because Fred Sylaat is a former county employee.

Hanson Re-elected As PUC Chairman

PIERRE (AP) — The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission has re-elected Gary Hanson as its chairman.

The vote was held among the panel's three commissioners — Hanson, Chris Nelson and Kristie Fiegen — at the commission's meeting on Tuesday. Nelson was elected as vice chairman.

Hanson is serving his second six-year term on the commission. He was first elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2008. He has also served as mayor of Sioux Falls from 1994 to 2002 and as a South Dakota state senator for three terms.

Hanson says he appreciates the confidence of the other two commissioners their goal is to assure South Dakotans have safe, dependable and affordable utilities.



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S.D. Police Chiefs Advise Gov. On School Safety

**BY CHET BROKAW**  
Associated Press

FORT PIERRE — Entry into South Dakota's school buildings should be restricted to help prevent shootings like last month's tragedy in Newtown, Conn., police chiefs from around the state told Gov. Dennis Daugaard on Wednesday.

Some police chiefs also said changes in laws or procedures may be needed to help them deal with mentally ill people who pose threats because they have guns.

Daugaard said he had intended to talk to the South Dakota Police Chiefs' Association about a plan to cut prison costs by treating more offenders outside prison walls, but instead decided to ask the more than two dozen police chiefs at the meeting for their thoughts on gun control and school safety. He said he expects those issues to come up in this year's legislative session in the wake of the Dec. 14 elementary school shooting in Connecticut that left 20 children and six adults dead.

After meeting with the police chiefs, Daugaard said he hasn't decided what position

he will take on gun control and school safety during the legislative session. "I want to think about it some more," the Republican governor said.

Daugaard has said he supports gun rights, but last year he vetoed a bill approved by legislators that called for allowing most adults to carry concealed handguns without permits. He argued that the measure would have made it difficult for law officers to determine if people were qualified to carry concealed weapons.

A similar bill has been introduced this year. Some lawmakers have also said they will promote a measure allowing teachers and administrators to bring guns to school so they could stop an armed intruder.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama on Wednesday proposed bans on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines, along with a requirement for universal background checks on gun buyers.

The South Dakota police chiefs who met with Daugaard did not comment on the president's proposal, but several said they believe it's too easy for people to get into school buildings.

Steve Allender, police chief in Rapid City, said schools are still being built so parents and other visitors get far into the building before checking in, and back doors are not secured.

Aberdeen Chief Don Lanpher Jr. said entry cards could help, but that securing schools will continue to be a difficult task. "We'd have to build a fort to protect them," he said.

Changes such as strengthening glass in school entryways would make it more difficult for intruders to get into buildings, which would give law officers more time to answer emergency calls and stop someone with a gun, said Brookings Chief Jeff Miller. He said all officers in his department have taken part in emergency response exercises.

"If we're going to have an incident happen, seconds and minutes count," Miller said.

He said some police chiefs might be reluctant to take stands on gun control and a ban on assault rifles because they are hunters and believe in the constitutional right to bear arms.

Allender said police find it difficult to

deal with mentally ill people who have guns and are a threat to public safety. Rapid City police are tracking a man who is mentally ill and recently bought an assault-style rifle, but the man can legally have the gun because he's never been adjudicated as mentally ill or convicted of a felony, he said.

Officials could try to get the man committed for mental health treatment, but that's difficult to accomplish, Allender said.

Miller said police in Brookings and other cities have identified people who are threats. "We know in our communities who these ticking time bombs are. We can't ignore them," Miller said.

Joanna Vitek, police chief in Watertown, said most South Dakota cities are small, which means law officers can help prevent school shootings by forging relationships with students, teachers, parents and others. Those people then will be more willing to call police when they suspect someone is a threat, she said.

"If we see something that looks a little strange, raise the red flag so we can intervene. I think the key here is to do something before it happens," Vitek said.

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