

# Neb. Lawmakers Push Toward Session's End

BY GRANT SCHULTE  
 Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska lawmakers are forging ahead slowly this year with a state budget, a new school funding formula, and an overhaul of juvenile services, but many of the most contentious priorities will likely have to wait.

With three weeks left in the session, supporters of a Medicaid expansion bill are still short of the votes needed to overcome a filibuster. A death penalty bill was killed in a similar fashion. A major tax overhaul championed by Gov. Dave Heineman was shelved, in favor of a tax study.

Sen. Bob Krist of Omaha said the Medicaid bill will likely have to wait until next year. He likened it to a drawn-out debate last year over a proposal to restore prenatal care services to the unborn children of illegal immigrants. The state cut off funding for the services in 2010, and supporters weren't able to restore them until the middle of last year, when they overrode Heineman's veto.

"Some people have such a short-sighted viewpoint of 'We won, we lost,'" Krist said. "I was there in 2010, when we went down in flames on prenatal care. It took us years to regroup, to get our stuff together, and build a

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GREG ADAMS

coalition. But we got it. With (the Medicaid bill), it just may not be the full enchilada."

The Medicaid proposal would extend health care coverage to an estimated 54,000 childless, low-income adults, but Heineman and conservative lawmakers have argued that the program is unsustainable. Supporters have floated a series of compromise measures on Medicaid, including a sunset proposal on the expansion that would let lawmakers reevaluate it, or withdraw altogether if the federal government fails to fund it as promised.

The federal government has agreed to pay 100 percent of the cost for new Medicaid recipients from 2014 to 2016. Aid would gradually decrease until 2020, when the federal government would pay 90 percent of the costs for patients who fall under Medicaid expansion.

The Medicaid bill's sponsor, Sen. Kathy Campbell of Lincoln, said Friday that she still hadn't secured the 33 votes needed to force

an end to the debate. Campbell said the length of debate on many bills has been unusually high, but she argued that there's no single cause.

Debate on many bills has dragged because of filibusters, including many by longtime Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, who returned to the Capitol this year after sitting out four years because of term limits. A coalition of conservative senators railed for days at a time against the Medicaid bill, the budget and the death penalty repeal bill.

This year has also ushered in a class of 10 freshman lawmakers, who are still adjusting to the legislative customs, as well as new committee chairs and a first-year speaker.

"It's tougher this year because you have a lot of those variables," Campbell said. "It takes time to adjust. But once you know the cast of characters, you get a better sense of the Legislature's rhythm."

Speaker of the Legislature Greg Adams said the budget will also play a role in what bills end up passing this year. Lawmakers are already scaling back measures intended to help fight wildfires, increase access to mental health services for children, and give better treatment options to troubled juveniles.

"We're going to have to make some tough decisions," Adams said.

## Gunman's Girlfriend Admits Helping Hide Body

ALLIANCE, Neb. (AP) — A 20-year-old Hemingford woman has pleaded guilty to helping hide the body of a Denver man in northwest Nebraska months before her boyfriend died in an armed standoff.

Rose Siefke admitted Friday that she helped hide the body of 38-year-old Josh Bullock.

Siefke's trial was scheduled to begin Monday, but she agreed to plead guilty to the reduced charge after a judge ruled that some of what she told investigators couldn't be used.

Prosecutors said Siefke helped her boyfriend, Andres Gonzalez, hide Bullock's body in December 2011.

Gonzalez was killed last June after a daylong standoff with police in Alliance where he wounded three officers. Before his death, Gonzalez told police he had killed Bullock and buried the body in Dawes County.

Siefke provided incriminating details when she was interviewed by investigators the day after the standoff, and she was pregnant with Gonzalez' child at the time. She had denied any involvement in Bullock's death during two earlier interviews with investigators.

Box Butte County Judge Travis O'Gorman suppressed some of what Siefke said that day because investigators hadn't explained her legal rights to her. About 12 minutes of the interview was excluded.

According to court documents, Siefke told police that she chose the Dawes County location where she and Gonzalez burned Bullock's truck to conceal the body.

Prosecutors said Siefke helped Gonzalez dispose of Bullock's remains in several different locations, including dropping Bullock's head in a Chadron dumpster.

Siefke is scheduled to be sentenced on July 1. She now faces a maximum penalty of up to five years in prison under the reduced charge. Originally, she could have faced up to 20 years in prison.

## No Hazardous Material In Letters To Lawmakers

ABERDEEN (AP) — There weren't any hazardous materials in suspicious envelopes sent to the Aberdeen offices of South Dakota's congressional delegation, according to police.

The state laboratory stayed open late Friday to test envelopes mailed to the offices of Sen. John Thune, Sen. Tim Johnson and Rep. Kristi Noem, Aberdeen Police Capt. Dave McNeil told the *Aberdeen American News*.

McNeil said two envelopes at the state lab in Pierre also contained tea bags.

After the envelopes were reported, about 20 people were evacuated Friday from the US Bank building, where Thune and Johnson have offices.

Police closed off the block around the building for about two hours while the Aberdeen Fire and Rescue hazardous materials team investigated.

McNeil said a follow-up investigation will try to determine who sent the letters and which mail facility handled them.

The investigation will be conducted by the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation, the Aberdeen Police Department and several other agencies.

## S.D. Walk Fights Stigma Of Mental Illness

SIoux FALLS (AP) — Supporters of the National Alliance of Mental Illness have gathered in Sioux Falls to help in the fight to eliminate the stigma surrounding mental illness.

The *Argus Leader* reports that more than 30 teams registered to take part in Saturday's 2.8-mile walk. The event raised \$48,000 for education, advocacy and support for the more than 150,000 South Dakota who are affected by a mental illness.

The Sioux Falls walk is one of 83 held across the nation.

NAMI South Dakota is a statewide organization dedicated to improving the lives of people affected by mental illness.

Wendy Giebink, the organization's executive director, says education helps people understand that mental illness is an illness like any other.

## TWISTER TOUCHDOWN



TRAVIS HEYING/WICHITA EAGLE/MCT  
 A tornado touches down southwest of Wichita, Kansas, near the town of Viola on Sunday. The tornado was part of a line of storms that past through the central plains.

## S.D. School Sharing Plan Moving Slower Than Hoped

SIoux FALLS (AP) — A plan for several rural South Dakota school districts to share staff and hold more classes online will proceed more slowly than some had hoped.

Platte-Geddes Superintendent Dennis Goodwin had proposed that his district and those nearby should join forces by sharing teachers and having a single superintendent to save money. The Legislature passed a law that would save small school districts from forced consolidation if they agreed to such an agreement.

The *Argus Leader* reports that the Platte-Geddes, Wessington Springs, Armour and South Central school districts have agreed to look into sharing more teachers next year, aided by technology that allows teachers to teach in two towns at once. But the small school districts will keep their own CEOs for now.

"I think it's a little bit ahead of its time," Goodwin said.

Goodwin won't be around to see if his idea comes to fruition someday because he has been hired by the New Richland-Hart-

land, Ellendale-Geneva School District north of Albert Lea, Minn. He decided to move to be closer to his wife, who still lives near the Twin Cities.

Dan Guericke, of the Mid-Central Education Cooperative in Platte, will now take the lead as the South Dakota school districts look to expand their collaboration.

Guericke said about a dozen teachers in the area will have students from multiple school districts next year. When schools have an opening, officials will first check on the availability of teachers at partner schools before looking to hire their own. They're working on plans to pay more to those teachers who take on extra responsibilities.

The towns appear to have little appetite right now for sharing a superintendent, but that might happen later.

"We want to move forward as quickly as we can with sharing instructional staff," Guericke said. "I don't think anybody's going to fire an administrator to create a joint administrator."

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We remember those who have passed away and are especially dear to us.

On Saturday, May 25th we will publish in print and online at Yankton.net a Memorial Day section devoted to those who are gone but not forgotten.

*Aneta  
 Burrows*  
 Dec. 30, 1960-Nov. 8, 2002  
 Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.  
 Dan, Ann & Sarah

Select one of the verses below to accompany your tribute.

- We hold you in our thoughts and memories forever.
- May God cradle you in his arms, now and forever.
- Forever missed, never forgotten. May God hold you in the palm of His hand.
- Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together. My prayers will be with you until we meet again.
- The days we shared were sweet. I long to see you again in Gods heavenly glory.
- Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
- Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.
- May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.
- May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.
- You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.
- May God's graces shine over you for all time.
- You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.
- We send this message with a loving kiss for eternal rest and happiness.
- May the Lord bless you with His graces and warm, loving heart.
- I have written my own message and it is included.

To remember your loved one in this special way, send \$12.00 per listing, up to 25 word verse and \$5 for photo.

Fill out the form below and mail to:

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan/With Fondest Memories  
 319 Walnut Street, Yankton, SD 57078

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Name of deceased \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Date of passing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of selected verse \_\_\_\_\_ OR Personal message (25 word limit) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print your name here \_\_\_\_\_  
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