

Senator Rob Clements Column 8-21-2020

In January, 493 bills were introduced and others carried over from 2019. Over 200 bills were passed by the Legislature and the Governor signed all but eight that were vetoed. My previous article covered property tax relief, an abortion ban, and a military pension exemption. Here is a review some other new laws, and information about an interim study coming this fall.

LB 992 - Broadband Internet Service Act - incorporates the recommendations of the Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force to improve rural internet service. It allows for internet wiring, among other things, to run along existing utility easements and is an important development for rural Nebraska.

LB 1064 – Tobacco Age - raises the age to 21 for the legal use of tobacco products and electronic vaping of nicotine. It provides for penalties to those providing products to those under age and brings Nebraska into compliance with recent Federal law changes.

LB 1021 – “Micro TIF” bill - provides for simplified Tax Increment Financing (TIF) redevelopment in counties of less than 100,000 people (Cass and Otoe, not Sarpy). It gives incentives for projects to rehabilitate individual run down properties in substandard and blighted areas. It allows the repair or replacement of an “eyesore” structure at least 60 years old, a house up to \$250,000, and a multi-family or commercial building under \$1 million, when finished.

LB 781 – Treasurer training - requires continuing education for city and county treasurers and clerks who act as treasurer. The state auditor has discovered several cases of errors and dishonesty by treasurers, including some in my District. This bill is designed to reduce the number of these cases.

LR 415 – Inheritance Tax. - This fall, Legislative committees will hold hearings regarding a wide variety of issues. I introduced LR 415 to ask the Revenue Committee to examine Nebraska’s inheritance tax and whether it should be changed or eliminated.

Taking up to 18% of an estate seems quite high. Over the years I have seen how inheritance taxes can be punitive to families while not providing predictable revenue for counties. Only a few states levy this tax. We can do better than to complicate and, in some cases, create additional pain and suffering for families grieving the loss of a loved one. Any thoughts regarding this study are welcomed and appreciated. A hearing date has not yet been set.

Feel free to contact me or my staff for assistance, information, or questions on issues. You may reach me at: Senator Robert Clements, State Capitol Rm 812, Lincoln, NE 68509, Phone 4024712613, Email: rclements@leg.ne.gov.