

# Advocacy Toolkit for the Nebraska Legislature 2020

**NEBRASKANS  
FOR THE  
ARTS**





# Thank you for being an Arts Advocate!

The Nebraskans for the Arts (NFTA) has created this Advocacy Toolkit as a resource for those interested in developing the knowledge and skills to be effective advocates with the Nebraska Legislature.

Nebraska has a nonpartisan Unicameral; or single-house legislative body. This presents advocates a unique opportunity for citizens to interact with a group of 49 State Senators – the smallest legislative body in the United States – as a bill moves from introduction through three rounds of debate before final passage.

Whether you are new to advocacy or have been helping for many years to help promote the arts policy, this toolkit provides you with the information to communicate with Nebraska legislators in 2020.

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# Arts Advocacy Day

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# Schedule

Event/Activity	Time
Check-in (Warner Chamber, Rotunda, State Capitol Building)	9:00-9:30 a.m.
Advocacy Training & Issue Briefs (Warner Chamber)	9:30-11:00 a.m.
Visit State Senators Offices (Rotunda, Senator Offices)	11:00 a.m. - noon
Omaha Conservatory of Music's <i>Frontier Strings</i> performance	11:45 a.m.-noon
Lunch & Networking (3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, The Foundry, 211 N. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street)	Noon - 1:00 p.m.
"Arts & Community Development" Panel Presentation (3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, The Foundry, 211 N. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street)	1:00-2:00 p.m.
"Promoting Your Art: Digital Tools" (3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, The Foundry, 211 N. 14 <sup>th</sup> Street)	2:00-3:00 p.m.

## When You Arrive

Plan to arrive at the State Capitol at 9:00 a.m.

The Nebraska State Capitol main entrance is at the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> & K Streets. There are ground level entrances on each side of the State Capitol. Ground level entrances are open beginning at 7:30 a.m.

Parking may be found on the streets surrounding the State Capitol. Longer term parking may be found in the residential areas south of the State Capitol. The nearest parking garage is located at 12<sup>th</sup> and L Street. Accessible parking is available on K Street adjacent to the State Capitol's north entrance.

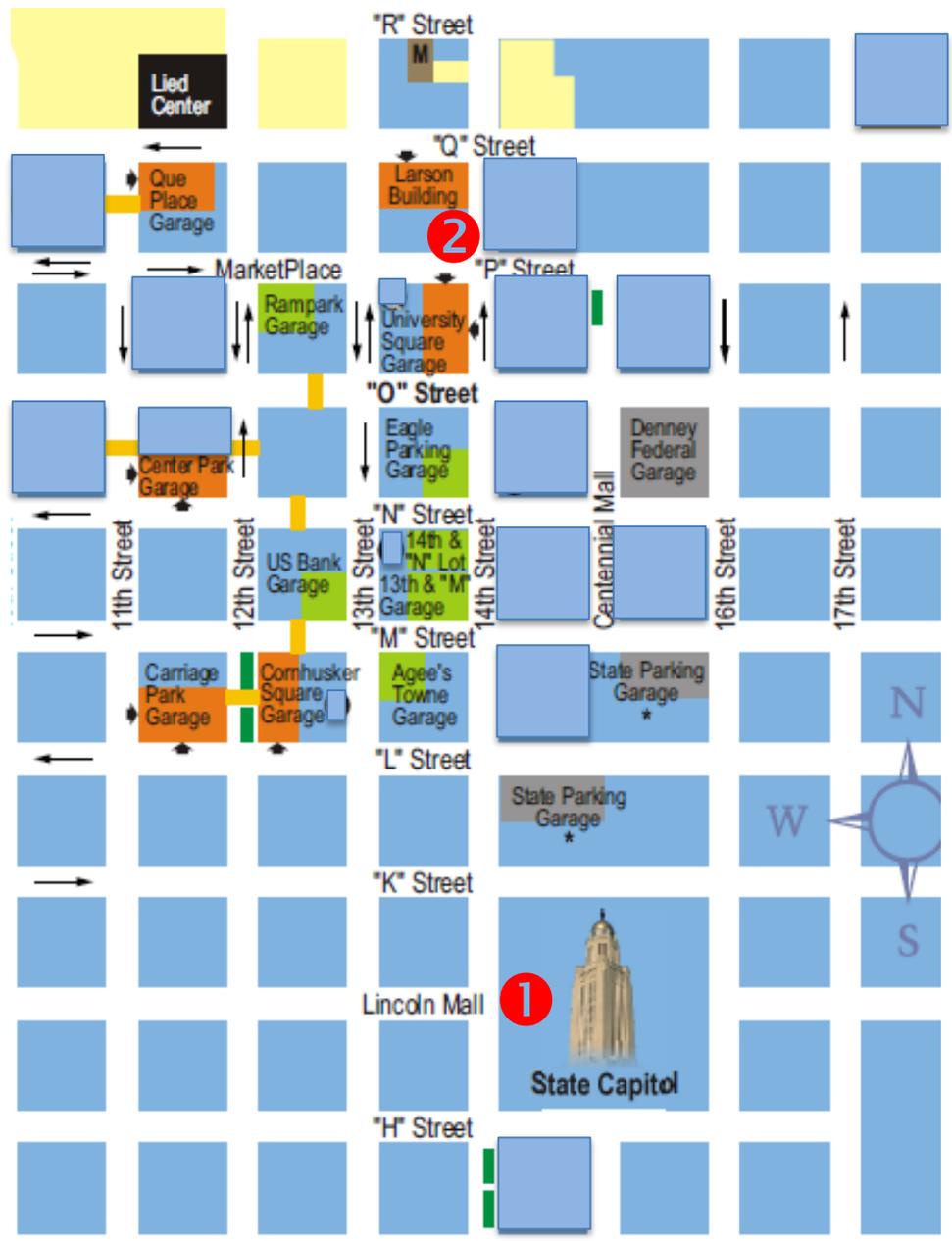
Proceed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Rotunda to check in. Check in at the Warner Chamber entrance to receive your nametag.

No food or beverage are permitted in the Warner Chamber. A cafeteria is available on the ground floor of the State Capitol.

*If you have any questions before the event, please contact Doug Zbylut at 402-595-2125 or [doug@nebraskansforthearts.org](mailto:doug@nebraskansforthearts.org).*

# Locations of Events - Parking Garage Locations

- 1** *Advocacy Training and Meetings with State Senators*  
State Capitol  
Warner Chamber
- 2** *Lunch and afternoon presentations*  
The Foundry  
211 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room



- ◆ Parking Garage Entrances
- ▬ Skywalk
- City Parking Facilities
- Privately-Owned Parking Facilities
- UNL Parking Facilities
- Bus Parking only for school buses & motor coaches

# Talking to your Senator

*Making conversation with your legislator is not as intimidating as it may seem. Use these ideas as a guide to your discussion on the importance of the arts and culture to your community.*

**Remember the main goal is to communicate your passion for your community and for the arts in your community – your State Senator wants to know the good work being done.**

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## **Before talking to your Senator/visiting their office:**

- If in a group, decide who in your group is best suited to speak about the issues important to you. Decide on a list of no more than three things you want your Senator to know.
- Have any materials and handouts ready.

## **When talking to your Senator/visiting their office:**

- Initial speaker should introduce their group to initial contact. If an office visit, you will be directed to see the Senator or an aide if the Senator is unavailable.
- Senators may be called away at the last minute, so you may be asked to meet with a staff member. Do not feel slighted. Meeting with a staff member can be just as influential, since staff carefully brief the Senator on meetings and issues.
- Address the legislator as Senator. This is a courtesy that shows respect for the office.
- Briefly introduce each person you are with if you are in a group setting at an event or team member(s) if you are on an office visit.
- Thank the Senator for their time and precede to your 3 advocacy points. Be succinct; Senators appreciate clarity and brevity.
- Share a brief personal story about the impact of the arts in the Senator's district; try to pair it with data about arts in the district.
- The Senator may have questions. Answer them as best you can; don't worry if you cannot answer right away. Tell them that you will get them the information as soon as possible. Contact Nebraskans for the Arts with assistance if you need it.

## **When it is time to leave, make sure you do the following:**

- Thank the Senator for the meeting and his/her service to Nebraska.
- Invite them to one of your next events.
- Give the Senator his/her packet of information and other materials you would like to share.

**Remember, make your conversation personal and heartfelt. Be genuine in your enthusiasm for the arts by talking about what you know best, and most importantly, thank them for your support!**

# 2020 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts

The following are some talking points we wish advocates to deliver during the 2020 legislative session. **Choose 2-3 points relevant to you that you wish to share:**

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## The Arts Mean....

### ....Better Skills

- ✓ Arts spark creativity and innovation. The Conference Board reports that **creativity is among the top 5 applied skills sought by business leaders**—with 72 percent saying creativity is of high importance when hiring. Their *Ready to Innovate* report concludes, “The arts—music, creative writing, drawing, dance—provide skills sought by employers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium.”
- ✓ Nebraska’s vibrant arts community makes us a strong recruiting draw in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy and sets us apart from other states. Nebraska’s arts sector:
  - Generates jobs
  - Attracts businesses
  - Cultivates innovation of employees by encouraging and developing creative skills

### ....Better Schools

- ✓ Students with high arts participation and low socioeconomic status have a **4% dropout rate – five times lower** than their socioeconomic status peers.
- ✓ Data from the College Board shows that students who take four years of arts and music classes while in high school average almost **98 points higher on their SAT scores** than students who take only one-half year or less.

### ....Better Communities

- ✓ The arts are essential to the health and vitality of our communities and our nation. They improve the quality of life in our cities and town. They enhance community development; spur urban renewal; attract new businesses; draw tourism dollars; and create an environment that attracts skilled, educated workers and builds your third millennium workforce.

## LB942: “Support the Arts” License Plates

- ✓ This bill authorizes the Department of Motor Vehicles to design, in consultation with the Nebraska Arts Council, a license plate that will help support the arts in the state.
- ✓ Proceeds from the sales of these license plates will be used to aid communities that develop certified creative districts as proposed in LB943.

# 2020 Menu of Talking Points for the Arts

Just remember – make your conversation personal and heartfelt. Be genuine in your enthusiasm for the arts by talking about what you know best, and most importantly, thank them for your support!

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## LB943: Creative Districts

- ✓ LB943 would authorize the Nebraska Arts Council to recommend a plan to the Legislature for the certification and development of creative districts in the state.
- ✓ The bill also permits the Nebraska Arts Council to prepare a plan to create a competitive grants program to provide a grant to any certified creative district. Funding for the grants program would come from the sale of “Support the Arts” license plates proposed in LB942.
- ✓ The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production accounts for **\$2,732,028,000** and **2.3%** of the **Nebraska** economy, contributing **28,135 jobs**.
- ✓ Creative districts can serve as a cornerstone of tourism, economic development, and the revitalization of many downtowns. Creative districts help generate tax revenues, jobs, and a creativity-based economy.

## LB422: Nebraska Arts Council

- ✓ This bill allows the certification of art therapists by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to practice in the state.
- ✓ An application is currently being reviewed by a licensing committee at DHHS as part of a “407 review” process for health professions. This review must take place and a recommendation sent to the Legislature before a health professions bill is taken into consideration.

## Nebraska Arts Council

- ✓ The Nebraska Arts Council grants programs are a catalyst for bringing a diversity of arts programs to children and adults across Nebraska. Grants are matched by other resources, leveraging these investments.

## Nebraska Cultural Endowment

- ✓ The Nebraska Cultural Endowment is the first cultural endowment in the nation to sustain both the arts and humanities; its resources support the programs and grants funded by Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Arts Council.
- ✓ The Nebraska Cultural Endowment is a true private-public partnership; private gifts are matched by a State fund and are used to benefit communities.

# 2020 Nebraska Legislature

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JANUARY 9 - 11, 2019

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JANUARY 9 - 11, 2019

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## Find Your Senator:

The Legislature's website, [www.NebraskaLegislature.gov](http://www.NebraskaLegislature.gov), provides an easy tool for identifying your district and senator.

Enter your full address into the "Find Your Senator" search field on the right-hand side of the website home page and press the Enter key. Your district number and a picture of your senator will be displayed on the right, along with a link to that senator's web page.

This web page contains the senator's contact information and links to their biography and photos. It also provides a list of committees they serve on, the bills they've introduced and links to coverage of them in the Unicameral Update.

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news.legislature.ne.gov/dist24

Sen. Dave Murman  
Glenvil, District 38  
Room 1522  
(402) 471-2732  
dmurman@leg.ne.gov  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist38

Sen. Anna Wishart  
Lincoln, District 27  
Room 1308  
(402) 471-2632  
awishart@leg.ne.gov  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist27

Sen. Ernie Chambers  
Omaha, District 11  
Room 1302  
(402) 471-2612  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist11

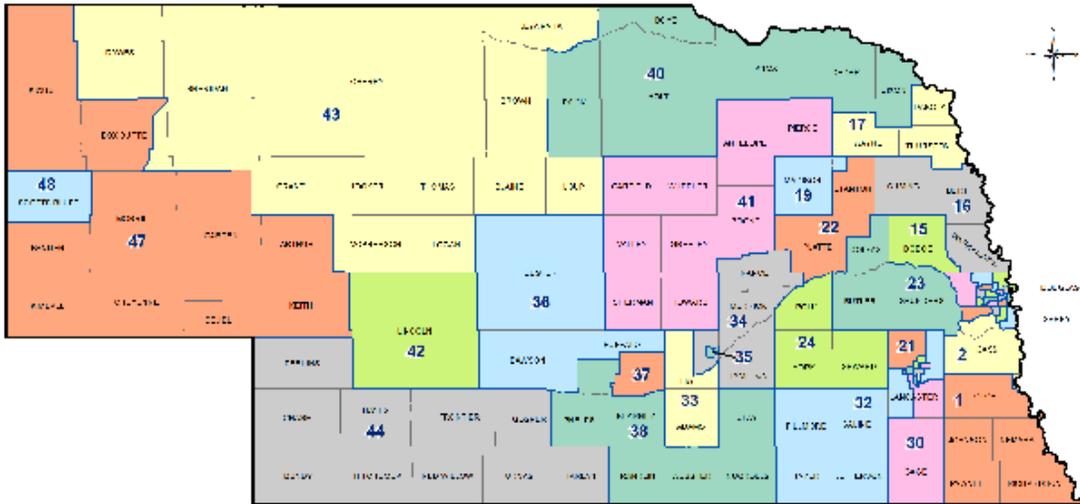
Sen. Steve Halloran  
Hastings, District 33  
Room 1022  
(402) 471-2712  
shalloran@leg.ne.gov  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist33

Sen. Andrew La Grone  
Gretna, District 49  
11th Floor  
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alagrone@leg.ne.gov  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist49

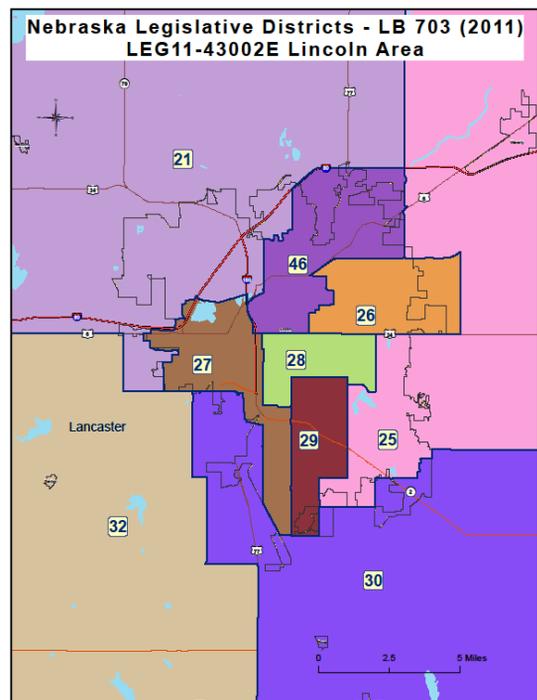
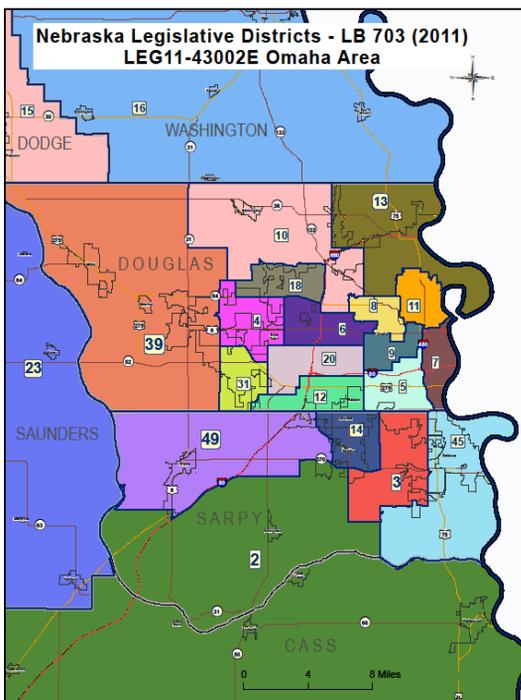
Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks  
Lincoln, District 28  
Room 1016  
(402) 471-2633  
ppansingbrooks@leg.ne.gov  
news.legislature.ne.gov/dist28

# Nebraska Legislative Districts - LB 703 (2011)

(Districts took effect May 27, 2011)



Geographic Information Systems  
 Map Created by: Tasha Strick, GIS Specialist  
 Source: UN, Census Bureau  
 Date Created: 6/27/2011



**2020 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**  
Committee on Committees Final Report  
Standing Committees

Updated 1/7/2020

**Agriculture (8)**

***Rm. 1524 - Tuesday***

Halloran (C), Brandt (VC), Blood, Chambers, Hansen, B., Lathrop, Moser, Slama

**Appropriations (9)**

***Rm. 1003 - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Stinner (C), Bolz (VC), Clements, Dorn, Erdman, Hilkemann, McDonnell, Vargas, Wishart

**Banking, Commerce and Insurance (8)**

***Rm. 1507 - Monday & Tuesday***

Williams (C), Lindstrom (VC), Gragert, Howard, Kolterman, La Grone, McCollister, Quick

**Business and Labor (7)**

***Rm. 1524 - Monday***

Hansen, M. (C), Hansen, B. (VC), Chambers, Crawford, Halloran, Lathrop, Slama

**Education (8)**

***Rm. 1525 - Monday & Tuesday***

Groene (C), Walz (VC), Brewer, Kolowski, Linehan, Morfeld, Murman, Pansing Brooks

**General Affairs (8)**

***Rm. 1510 - Monday***

Briese (C), Lowe (VC), Arch, Blood, Brandt, Hunt, Moser, Wayne

**Government, Military and Veterans Affairs (8)**

***Rm. 1507 - Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Brewer (C), La Grone (VC), Blood, Hansen, M., Hilgers, Hunt, Kolowski, Lowe

**Health and Human Services (7)**

***Rm. 1510 - Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Howard (C), Arch (VC), Cavanaugh, Hansen, B., Murman, Walz, Williams

**Judiciary (8)**

***Rm. 1113 - Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Lathrop (C), Pansing Brooks (VC), Brandt, Chambers, DeBoer, Morfeld, Slama, Wayne

**Natural Resources (8)**

***Rm. 1525 - Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Hughes (C), Bostelman (VC), Albrecht, Geist, Gragert, Halloran, Moser, Quick

**Nebraska Retirement Systems (6)**

***Rm. 1507 - At call of Chair***

Kolterman (C), Lindstrom (VC), Bolz, Groene, Kolowski, Stinner

**Revenue (8)**

***Rm. 1524 - Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday***

Linehan (C), Friesen (VC), Briese, Crawford, Groene, Kolterman, Lindstrom, McCollister

**Transportation and Telecommunications (8)**

***Rm. 1113 - Monday & Tuesday***

Friesen (C), Geist (VC), Albrecht, Bostelman, Cavanaugh, DeBoer, Hilgers, Hughes

**Urban Affairs (7)**

***Rm. 1510 - Tuesday***

Wayne (C), Hunt (VC), Arch, Briese, Crawford, Hansen, M., Lowe

## Select Committees

### **Committee on Committees (13)**

Hilkemann (C)

#### District 1:

Bostelman

Hilgers

Pansing Brooks

Morfeld (VC)

#### District 2:

Howard

Lathrop

Lindstrom

Vargas

#### District 3:

Erdman

Friesen

Groene

Murman

### **Enrollment and Review (1)**

Slama (C)

### **Reference (9)**

Hilgers (C), Vargas (VC), Bolz, Chambers, Hughes, Kolterman, Lowe, McCollister, Scheer, Stinner (nonvoting ex officio)

### **Rules (6)**

Crawford (C), Erdman (VC), Howard, Hansen, M., Lathrop, Scheer (ex officio)

## Special Committees

### **Building Maintenance (6)**

Erdman (C), Lowe (VC), Bostelman, Brandt, McDonnell, Stinner

### **Education Commission of the States (3)**

Groene, Morfeld, Murman

### **Executive Board of the Legislative Council (9)**

Hilgers (C), Vargas (VC), Bolz, Chambers, Hughes, Kolterman, Lowe, McCollister, Scheer, Stinner (nonvoting ex officio)

### **Justice Reinvestment Oversight (5)**

Lathrop (C), DeBoer, McCollister, Pansing Brooks, Wayne

### **Legislative Performance Audit (7)**

Geist (C), Crawford (VC), Friesen, Hansen, B., Hilgers, Scheer, Stinner

### **Legislature's Planning (9)**

Vargas (C), McCollister (VC), Clements, DeBoer, Hansen, M., Hilgers, Scheer, Stinner, Williams

### **Midwestern Higher Education Commission (Midwest Compact) (2)**

Kolowski, Slama

### **State-Tribal Relations (7)**

Hilkemann (C), Wishart (VC), Albrecht, Brewer, Gragert, Hunt, Walz

# State Capitol Information

For information about the State Capitol, its history, and its visiting hours, please visit [www.statecapitol.org](#).  
For more information about tours, contact the State Capitol Tours Office at (402) 471-0448.

## **Driving Directions**

The Nebraska State Capitol is located at the south edge of downtown Lincoln, Nebraska, at the intersection of 15th and K streets.

### *From Interstate 80:*

take the 9th Street/Downtown exit and follow I-180 south into downtown Lincoln  
turn left (east) on K Street and proceed 6 blocks

## **Parking**

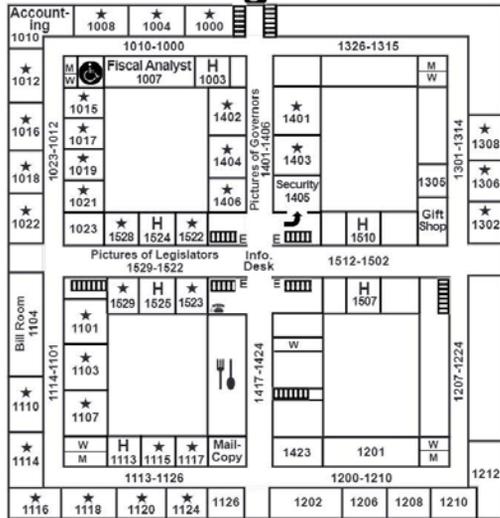
Free one and two-hour parking may be found on the streets surrounding the State Capitol. Longer term parking may be found in the residential areas south of the State Capitol. The nearest public parking garage is located at 12th and L streets. Accessible parking is available on K Street adjacent to the State Capitol's north entrance.

## **Observing the Legislature**

- While you are visiting the Legislature, please abide by the following rules:
- Be seated and do not lean over the banister.
- Do not place anything on the banister.
- Drinks are not allowed in the balcony.
- You may take photographs, but the use of flash is not allowed.
- Applause or other demonstrations are not allowed.

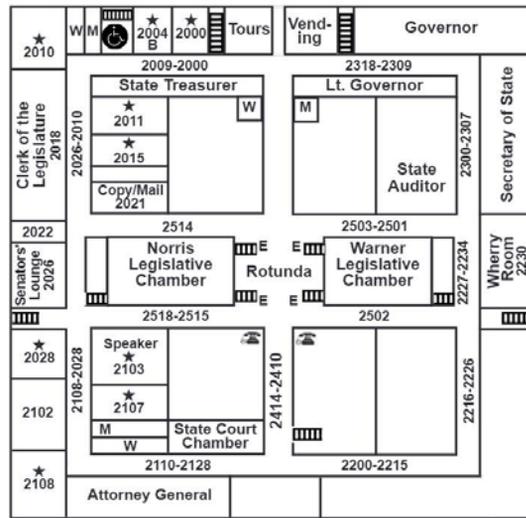
# NEBRASKA STATE CAPITOL MAP

## 1ST FLOOR



- E - Elevator
- ♿ - Accessible Elevator
- ♻️ - Accessible Entrance
- H - Hearing Rooms  
Rooms 1003, 1113, 1507,  
1510, 1524 & 1525
- ☎️ - Public Telephone
- ★ - Senator's Office
- 🪜 - Stairs
- M - Men's Restroom
- W - Women's Restroom

## 2ND FLOOR



- E - Elevator
- ♿ - Accessible Elevator
- H - Hearing Room  
Room 2102
- ☎️ - Public Telephone
- ★ - Senator's Office
- 🪜 - Stairs
- M - Men's Restroom
- W - Women's Restroom

## 2020 Legislative Session\*

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>January</b>						
			1	2	3	4
		7	8	9	10	11
			DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	RECESS	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	HOLIDAY	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15	DAY 16	

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>February</b>						
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20	RECESS	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	DAY 21	DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	RECESS	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	HOLIDAY	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	DAY 29	DAY 30	DAY 31	DAY 32	RECESS	

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>March</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	RECESS	DAY 33	DAY 34	DAY 35	DAY 36	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	DAY 37	DAY 38	DAY 39	DAY 40	RECESS	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	RECESS	DAY 41	DAY 42	DAY 43	DAY 44	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	DAY 45	DAY 46	DAY 47	DAY 48	RECESS	
29	30	31				
	RECESS	DAY 49				

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<b>April</b>						
				1	2	3
			DAY 50	DAY 51	DAY 52	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	DAY 53	DAY 54	DAY 55	DAY 56	RECESS	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
	RECESS	DAY 57	DAY 58	DAY 59	RECESS	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	DAY 60		
26	27	28	29	30		

**Federal & State Holidays**  
 January 20 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
 February 17 - Presidents' Day

**Legislative Recess Days**  
 January 17  
 February 7, 14, 28  
 March 2, 13, 16, 27, 30  
 April 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22

\*The Speaker reserves the right to revise the session calendar.

# Lawmaking in Nebraska

The lawmaking process in Nebraska officially begins when a senator introduces a bill into the Legislature, which meets each January. But the process actually begins much earlier, when a senator first begins to formulate ideas for new laws.

An idea for a new law may be suggested by anyone: concerned citizens, special interest groups, state agencies or the governor. But before the Legislature can formally consider the idea, it must be introduced as a bill by a senator or legislative committee.

Committees debate and propose amendments to bills, and the full Legislature has an opportunity to debate each bill at least two times before its final passage. Senators may propose amendments to alter a bill at each stage of debate.

Read through the steps below to learn how a bill becomes a Nebraska state law.

## **Idea**

First, a senator and his or her staff research a problem and study possible legislative remedies. A senator may introduce a bill to create a new law, repeal an existing law or change a law.

The Legislature has a research division that helps senators with their research projects. Much of their research is done during the period between sessions called the interim. During this time, legislative committees study a variety of issues that have been outlined in interim study resolutions passed by the Legislature.

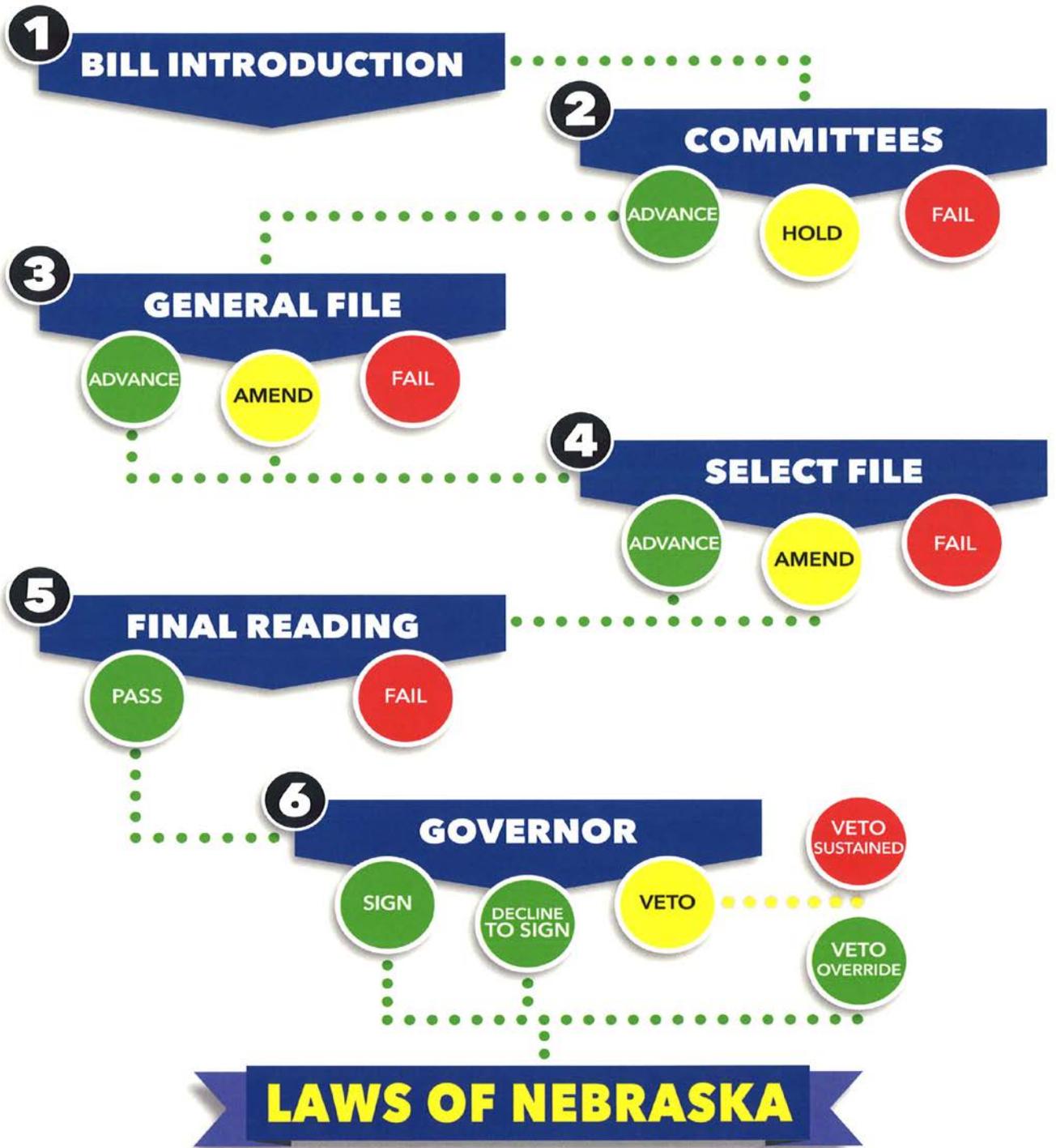
A senator brings his or her idea for a new law to a bill drafter, who works with the senator to transform the idea into the proper legal form for a legislative bill. Unlike some states, bills introduced in Nebraska may contain only one subject.

## **Introduction**

Most bills are introduced during the first 10 days of the legislative session which begins each January. In order to introduce a bill, a senator files it with the Clerk of the Legislature. The clerk reads the title of the bill into the record, assigns it a number and prints copies of it for public and legislative use.

The Legislative Fiscal Office prepares budget statements that estimate the anticipated change in state, county, or municipal expenses or revenue under the provisions of each bill. This statement is called a fiscal note. The fiscal note contains three estimates. One estimate is calculated by the fiscal office staff; another is prepared by the governor's budget office; and a third is prepared by the affected state agency. In addition, the fiscal office prepares appropriations bills ("A" bills), which accompany bills that have a fiscal impact.

# HOW LAWS ARE MADE IN THE UNICAMERAL



Credit/Source: "Nebraska Legislature 101: How a Bill Becomes a Law," Nebraska Appleseed

## **Committee**

A nine-member Reference Committee then determines which bills will go to each one of the 14 standing committees. With the exception of a few technical bills, most bills introduced into the Legislature must receive a public hearing by a committee. At hearings, citizens have a chance to express their opinions to committee members. Testimony is recorded and transcribed to become a part of the official committee record.

After the hearing, committees may:

- vote to send the bill to general file with or without amendments,
- indefinitely postpone the bill, or
- take no action on it.
- Go to the Committees portion of this site for more information on committee membership and the committee process.

## **General File**

General File is the first time the full Legislature has the opportunity to debate and vote on bills. At this stage, senators consider amendments, which may be proposed by committees and by individual senators. Many people consider General File to be the most crucial stage of the legislative process because it is where most compromises are reached. It takes a majority vote of the Legislature (25 votes) to adopt amendments or move a bill from General File to the next stage of consideration.

## **Enrollment & Review**

Commonly referred to as "E & R," enrollment and review is a process by which previously adopted amendments are incorporated into a bill, and the bill is checked for technical and grammatical accuracy.

## **Select File**

Select File is the second debating and voting stage. This step allows another opportunity for amendment, compromise and reflection. Bills on Select File may be indefinitely postponed or advanced to the next stage. After Select File, bills are sent to E & R again to be rechecked. Bills then are reprinted for Final Reading.

## **Final Reading**

Before final passage, all bills are constitutionally required to be read aloud in their entirety by the Clerk of the Legislature, unless three-fifths (30 members) of the Legislature votes to waive the requirement. A bill may not be amended or debated on Final Reading, but may be returned to Select File for a specific amendment. Bills may not be voted on for final passage until at least five legislative days after the bill is introduced, and one legislative day after it is placed on Final Reading.

A proposed constitutional amendment requires a three-fifths vote of the elected members (30) to place it on the general election ballot and a four-fifths vote (40) to place it on a primary or special election ballot. All other bills without an emergency clause require a simple majority vote before going to the governor. A bill with an emergency clause requires a vote of two-thirds (33 members) of the Legislature.

## **Governor**

After the Legislature passes a bill on Final Reading, it goes to the governor for consideration. The governor has five days, excluding Sundays, to decide what to do with a bill. If the governor signs a bill or declines to act on it, the bill becomes a state law. The governor may veto a bill, and he or she has the authority to strike specific budget appropriations (line-item veto). The Legislature may override any gubernatorial veto, although it takes a vote of 30 senators to do so.

## **Laws of Nebraska**

Most bills passed and approved by the governor become law three calendar months after the Legislature adjourns. However, bills may take effect before that date if they contain an emergency clause or a specified operative date.

# Tips on Testifying at a Committee Hearing

## **The Hearing Process**

A committee may consider several bills during an afternoon. The committee chairperson determines the order in which bills will be heard, the rules for testifying and whether there will be a time limit on your testimony. The length of time spent on each bill varies and depends largely on the number of people testifying, the length of their testimony and the number of questions asked by committee members.

Usually, unless otherwise indicated, hearings begin at 1:30 p.m. Each bill is presented by the senator who sponsors it. After the sponsoring senator finishes his or her introduction, the committee chair typically will ask proponents of the bill to come forward individually and state their reasons for supporting the measure. Then, the chair will ask the bill's opponents to come forward and state their opinions. Often, committee chairpersons will allow individuals to testify in a neutral capacity.

If you want to testify before the committee, you will need to fill out the sign-in sheet at the witness table, orally identify yourself and spell your last name for the record, and state who, if anyone, you represent as you begin your testimony. It is important to remember that committee proceedings are transcribed verbatim.

Letters or written communications containing support, opposition or neutral testimony also are accepted by committees during a bill's public hearing. Persons wishing to send written information should address their correspondence to the office of the senator who chairs the committee and ensure that the information arrives by 5:00 p.m. of the day before the hearing.

## **Citizen Testimony**

As a concerned citizen, there are several ways in which you may communicate effectively with your senator in an attempt to suggest or influence legislation. One way is to testify at a legislative hearing.

At public hearings, citizens have an opportunity within the time available to make their views known or have them incorporated into the official committee record. In Nebraska, gubernatorial appointments and most bills, with the exception of a few technical bills, receive a public hearing by one of the Legislature's committees.

Generally, testimony on legislative bills is heard by one of the Legislature's 14 standing committees:

- Agriculture
- Appropriations
- Banking, Commerce and Insurance
- Business and Labor
- Education
- General Affairs
- Government, Military and Veterans Affairs
- Health and Human Services
- Judiciary
- Natural Resources
- Nebraska Retirement Systems
- Revenue
- Transportation and Telecommunications
- Urban Affairs

Each of these committees has seven to nine members.

## **Testimony Tips**

Be aware that sometimes the sponsor of a bill will offer amendments when he or she presents the bill to the committee. These proposed amendments may change the way you feel about the bill and, thus, affect your testimony.

Be prepared to limit your testimony and try not to repeat testimony offered by previous witnesses. Remember that while senators want to hear what you have to say, there are numerous witnesses who also want to be heard.

Be prepared to answer questions asked by committee members.

Most observers agree that, as a witness, you will be more effective in getting your message across if you have prepared your testimony in writing. If you do this, it is helpful to bring enough copies to distribute to all committee members, the two committee staff members, media and the transcribers' office. Fifteen copies is usually enough to accomplish this. If written testimony is lengthy, it can be distributed and summarized orally to conserve the committee's time.

Addressing committee members or witnesses from the audience, public demonstrations and applause are prohibited.

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*Our work would not be possible without the support from non-profit organizations, local arts agencies, businesses, and individuals. Thank you for your support and commitment to advancing the arts as essential to the lives and learning of all Nebraskans!*

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