

Telephone conference report to Imperial, Grant, Palisade on Tuesday, March 23.

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Senator Mark Christensen's bill

to fix the occupation tax, LB 862, got its first appearance on the Legislative floor Tuesday.

His bill was among two water bills before the Legislature Tuesday. Senators also took up LB 1058, Sen. Tom Carlson's bill to create a Republican Basin Task Force.

During his weekly call-in Tuesday morning, Christensen said the bill will go forward, despite last week's ruling that the occupation tax in LB 701 is constitutional.

He said the occupation tax still faces a Nebraska Supreme Court challenge. If its ruled unconstitutional because it's closed class legislation, Christensen said LB 862 would address that.

The bill was scheduled for first-round debate last week but ending up taking backseat to first round debate on LB 1048, the wind energy bill.

Carlson's task force creation bill looks to be headed for easy passage, Christensen said.

He said it passed with no dissenting votes on first reading and doesn't expect any opposition going forward.

If passed, the governor will appoint a task force to examine Republican River Basin issues.

While Carlson has assured Christensen he will have input on who's appointed to the task force, the Imperial senator said he's still concerned about the appointment process.

Fetal Pain Bill

Christensen said LB 1103, which dictates when fetal pain begins, will garner a lot of debate on the floor, along with LB 594, which requires doctors to inform a patient about abortion options.

Last week, the Legislature did not advance LB 1110, which provided prenatal care to expectant immigrant mothers.

Since that action, some care providers said abortion is becoming another choice for these patients.

While some mothers typically choose abortion in this situation, the recent action by the Legislator brought more attention to this issue.

Christensen said it's likely LB 1110 could be amended to one of the other bills, LB 1103 or LB 594.

Other Bills Advance

Several other bills got pushed along last week, including:

- One to allow for fireworks to be used Dec. 28-Jan.1, in addition to the June 24-July 5 window now observed.
- Christensen said there's lots of interest in eliminating the state treasurer's office and said people in the state will get to vote on the issue.
- Christensen said the body advanced LB 563, which addresses contractors who hire people as subcontractors.

Often, contractors classify workers as a subcontractor to avoid having to carry workmen's comp insurance on the workers and having to match Social Security.

Christensen said the bill was brought to address abuse in the roofing industry in particular.

Constituents with questions, comments or concerns may contact Christensen at 402-471-2805.

Other information is also available at his legislative website:
<http://news.legislature.ne.gov/dist44/>

SENATOR MARK CHRISTENSEN *holds a weekly teleconference at 7 a.m. MT each Tuesday with sites at the Imperial Republican, Midwest Electric in Grant and Southwest Public Power in Palisade.*□

The teleconferences are open to the public and Christensen encourages constituent participation.