

By Mark Christensen

State Sen. 44th District

Early last week, the General

Affairs Committee listened to four bills regarding gambling issues in Nebraska. Two of these proposed bills have been advanced to General File.

The first bill the committee heard was LB 73, introduced by Omaha Senator Beau McCoy.

Legislative Bill 73 replaces the live race day formula for interstate simulcasting, with a requirement to have a combined total of 49 live race days across the state.

Legislative Bill 590 would allow Nebraska licensed horse-racing premises to have the ability to install and operate Instant Racing Terminals. This would allow the horse racing industry to provide additional means of wagering on horse races within the area of the licensed horse racetrack.

In other words, it would allow individuals that are at a race track to wager on historic races via a gambling machine.

This bill was voted out of committee with a 6-2 vote and will be heard on General File.

Legislative Resolution 41 is a constitutional amendment that coincides with LB 590.

This resolution would allow the Legislature to enact laws for licensing and regulation of wagering machines that simulcast historic horse races.

This bill was also voted out of committee, with a 6-1 vote and one present but not voting. LR41 will be heard on General

Lastly, Legislative Bill 642 was introduced by Senator Heath Mello of Omaha. LB 642 would clarify the legalities of pari-mutuel wagering.

It would make it illegal for any person or entity to accept pari-mutuel wagering, except at a licensed racetrack facility. It increases criminal penalties for accepting pari-mutuel wagers outside of a licensed racetrack.

Pari-mutuel wagering is when holders of winning tickets divide the total amount wagered in proportion to their wagers.

The committee has not made any decision as to the future of this bill at this time.

I am not a proponent of gambling, in any shape or form, but I will be sure to closely follow all these bills and will carefully study their impact on Nebraskans.

Christensen's LB 52 Debated

Last week ended on the 26th day of the Legislature and my bill, LB 52, was heard on General File.

Legislative Bill 52 would allow the director of the Department of Correctional Services to enter into arrangements with any charitable, fraternal, or non-profit corporation for labor services that have a public benefit by persons committed to the incarceration work camp.

This was previously done and was requested by some McCook community members to allow for this to happen again, especially at the McCook Work Camp.

No action was taken on the bill due to lack of time and some concerns raised by other senators.

Pending amendments to the bill would require the inmate to volunteer to serve on a work force. That is how it is presently being done with governmental entities.

LB 52 was on Tuesday's agenda for further discussion on General File.

After a much needed recess day at the Legislature, followed by a day off to celebrate

President's day, I am looking forward to the upcoming week and debating the bills that come to the floor of the Legislature.

I would also like to mention that if there are any constituents currently serving in the military, I would like to know who they are and display their name and picture in my office.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please contact my office at, PO Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509, or 402-471-2805.

Senator MARK CHRISTENSEN holds weekly teleconferences at 7 a.m. MT/8 a.m. CT each Tuesday morning. The public is invited to attend the conference calls. Hosts of the conference calls are Imperial Republican in Imperial, Southwest Public Power District in Palisade and Midwest Electric in Grant. Christensen can be reached at 402-471-2805, or by mail at P.O. Box 94604, Lincoln, NE 68509, or via e-mail at mchristensen@leg.ne.gov.