

Legislative Report - July 1, 2025

by Alice Licht-Anderson

I'm excited and honored to be asked to serve as your Legislative Chairman beginning this July. This came at the request of my long-time friend Shirley Huss (St. Michael's, Lincoln.) I'll try to live up to her and your expectations.

For many years my husband and I owned an association management company. Associations are much like the LDCCW in that they provided services to a group of like interests. We represented agri-businesses, hotels and motels, auctioneers, auto recyclers, physician assistants, pest control operators and other small business groups. We provided newsletters, lobbying, convention management, member employee training, problem solving and other services. My predominant role was in government relations and event management. I have since retired and my husband passed away three years ago. This opportunity seemed like a good fit to re-use some skills and stay active in the Catholic mission of service. It's been a number of years since we sold our company, so bear with me as I brush up on my skills and get up to speed on issues relevant to our LCCCW members.

I look forward to working with you, hearing from you and getting to know you. I am a member of Cathedral of the Risen Christ and have been active on the Stewardship Committee. I also know many of you from my prior career as we represented groups from across Nebraska. Some of you have suggested I report not only on legislation applicable to priorities of our Diocese, but to add information applying to all citizens of the state. We'll give that a shot this time.

Legislature Adjourns June 2 Closing 2025 Session

The Nebraska Legislature adjourned the 90 working-day session on June 2 - one day early. They will return to complete the second session in January for 60 working days. Any bills not indefinitely post-poned or passed this year carry over to the 2026 session along with more bills to be introduced by members of the Legislature. Special sessions (during the interim) may be called should emergency issues arise, issues deemed high priority at times by the Governor and other needs. No rumors have surfaced at this point of possibilities one being called between now and January.

Women Playing in Sports Top Priority in 2025 Session

Senator Kathleen Kauth (Legislative District 31 Omaha) championed LB 89, which provides for only women playing in women's sport competitions in Nebraska. Introduced on behalf of the Governor, the original bill contained provisions for the use of bath/locker room by females and males based on their gender, but due to opposition by one senator to acquire the 33 votes needed to break a filibuster, it was removed from the bill. Senator Kauth has indicated returning in the 2026 session to address this part of the issue.

Questions on Property Tax Evaluations

Most of you have probably received your property tax evaluations for this year from your county. Each Assessment Notice should contain information to allow for you to protest the valuation and the appropriate location to file your protest should you disagree with the new valuation.

High Property Taxes Continue to be Major Issue for Nebraskans

Although nearly every legislative session is opened with senators and government officials touting property tax relief, major legislation to significantly reduce reliance on property taxes did not pass this year. Nebraska relies on property taxes, sales and use taxes and income taxes to fund both local and state government. Unlike many other states, Nebraska does not have other sources of revenue such as severance taxes on oil, coal or other natural resources to rely on for revenue. Some states tout tourism taxes like Nevada or marijuana and gambling taxes as revenue sources. Much of state government is also funded by fees for licensing, taxes on products such as fertilizers and other programs. These fees provide for administration of various regulatory programs and agencies.

Nebraska's mainline state budget is about 30 percent each for K-12 education, Higher Education and entitlement programs for a total of about 90 percent. Thus, cutting spending in those categories becomes highly lobbied by the interest groups representing those areas. The reliance on property taxes at the local level provides additional funding, predominantly K-12 education. Making changes to this structure is highly controversial each year. Efforts to replace property tax revenue with increased sales taxes has drawn significant criticism. Governor Pillen has announced he intends to run for a second term in 2026. Property tax reduction remains a top item on his agenda.

One License Plate for Your Motor Vehicle

Beginning January 1, 2029, one license plate for your motor vehicle will take affect. LB 97 was the "Christmas Tree" bill (several bills amended into one) of the Transportation Committee toward the end of the session and included the license plate provisions. The bill also allows for renewing your plates for up to 3 years at a time, with all fees for those years being paid in the year you license your vehicle. The license shall appear on the rear of the vehicle. Many newer car models do not provide a place for a license plate on the front of vehicle. Some states already have gone this route for many years, such as Kansas.

Other Resources

To keep you up to date on activities of the Nebraska Catholic Conference, you may join their network by visiting their website at Nebraska Catholic Conference and go the Join Our Network Nebraska Catholic Conference. Or, you may contact them directly by telephone and ask them to enroll you at 402/477-7517.

The *UNICAMERAL UPDATE* is also a great, free (mailed to you) weekly publication from the Legislature during the session. It provides a listing of all bills introduced, hearing schedules, updates on legislation and recaps of the previous week's hearings and floor debate. You may contact the Unicameral Information Office at uiosubscribe@leg.ne.gov to subscribe or simply call and ask to be put on their mailing list at 402/471-2788.

Have a great 4th of July Holiday. God Bless America.

Till next newsletter,

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