

the Nebraska Medical Association. Helmets reduce serious injury and lower health care costs, he said, saving taxpayers' money. In addition, he said, more than 5,500 motorcyclists in the U.S. lost their lives in accidents in 2020.

"While there are inherent risks in riding motorcycles, helmets are the single most effective way to save those lives," Rosenquist said.

Also in opposition was Julia Keown, representing the Nebraska Nurses Association. Helmets prevent many catastrophic head injuries, she said, and a requirement to wear protective eye equipment as outlined in the bill would not offer the same level of protection.

"As Nebraska nurses, we believe that preventive measures like helmets will result in longer and better quality of life and ultimately reduce lifetime health care costs for Nebraskans," she said.

The committee took no immediate action on LB91.

### Czech heritage license plate proposed

A new specialty license plate celebrating Czech heritage would be available under a bill considered by the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee Jan. 23.

LB140, introduced by Plymouth Sen. Tom Brandt, would authorize the state Department of Motor Vehicles – in consultation with the Czech Honorary Consul of Nebraska – to design and issue Czech heritage motor vehicle license plates.

The fee for alphanumeric plates would be \$5 and a personalized license



Sen. Tom Brandt

plate would cost \$40. All funds would be credited to the Department of Motor Vehicles Cash Fund.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Brandt said, tens of thousands of Czechs made their way west, resulting in many Nebraskans with Czech ancestry.

"We're very fortunate to have many ways to celebrate Czech heritage and culture year-round in Nebraska, with August Czech Days in Wilber being one of the most popular," he said. "Czech heritage is an integral part of Nebraska history."

Layne Pierce, president of the UNL Czech Language Foundation, testified in support of LB140. The foundation was established in 1993 to preserve and promote Czech language, Pierce said, and UNL has offered Czech language and literature classes since 1907. Offering a Czech license plate would allow the community to continue to honor their heritage, he said.

"We take great pride in it," Pierce said. "We now have the largest undergraduate program in Czech in the entire country. Czech culture in Nebraska is something truly, truly special."

Linda Taborek, treasurer of Nebraska Czechs of Lincoln and the Czech Language Foundation, also spoke in support of the bill. Nebraska is said to have the most people with Czech heritage as a percentage of the population in the country, she said, and a license plate would honor the contributions that their ancestors made to the state.

"It is another way to show the love of our heritage and how important it is to continue the traditions that have helped make Nebraska what it is," Taborek said.

No one testified in opposition and the committee took no immediate action on the bill.

## URBAN AFFAIRS

### Bill would clarify SID requirements

The Urban Affairs Committee heard testimony Jan. 24 on a bill that would update state law relating to sanitary and improvement district regulations when an SID is located just outside the corporate boundaries of a municipality, known as a city's extra-territorial zoning jurisdiction, or ETJ.

LB246, introduced by Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, would require an SID located within a city's ETJ to comply with the comprehensive development plan, affordable housing action plan, municipal zoning regulations and any other reasonable planning requirements established by the municipality.



Sen. Terrell McKinney

Under the bill, an SID located within the ETJ of multiple municipalities would be subject to the regulations of the municipality with the largest population according to the most recent census data.

McKinney said his proposal would give cities the power to require affordable housing options in new SID developments that likely will become part of those cities through annexation as the municipalities grow.

"We have an affordable housing crisis in our state," he said. "We have to make sure we are building a community for everyone."

Christy Abraham, representing the League of Nebraska Municipalities, testified in support of LB246. SIDs often are formed with the intention of being annexed by the nearby city,