

## AN ACTIVE NOVEMBER FOR NEBRASKA SENATORS

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Nebraska's Legislative activity has been at the orange level during the past few weeks, and it will remain that way for the two weeks to come. A Special Session has been called to address the Safe Haven bill enacted last Session; and Tuesday's election will bring changes to the Legislature come January 7, when the 2009 Session begins.

### *Special Session*

**Governor Dave Heineman** has called a Special Session of the Legislature, which will convene November 14, and is expected to last seven days, according to the Speaker of the Legislature, **Mike Flood**. The Special Session will be limited to considering only bills addressing the age of children that may be left at safe havens. To date, 29 children have been left at safe havens in Nebraska, including some children from other states.

So far, two age limitations have been proposed. The law passed last spring, which became effective in July, contained no age limitation. Children as old as 17 have been left at Nebraska hospitals that serve as safe havens. The law was intended to provide a safe haven for newborn children whom parents might otherwise abandon. The youngest child left at a safe haven to date was a one-year-old. Governor Heineman's proposal, which Speaker Flood supports, would limit the law to accommodate only babies up to three days old. **Senator Rich Pahls**, of Omaha, has said he would introduce a proposal that would have a 30-day age limit.

While more bills may be introduced during the Special Session, they must all address the age limitation of the safe haven law. Bills addressing other topics may not be introduced until the regular Session begins in January 2009.

### *Legislative Elections*

Tuesday's general election will bring about changes for the upcoming regular Session. *Sixteen* new State Senators will be sworn in – fifteen to take seats vacated by term limits, and one who defeated an incumbent.

Two Lincoln races have yet to be decided. The elections in Districts 21 and 27 were decided by margins of less than one percent, thereby triggering automatic recounts. Counting of provisional ballots could change the outcome of either of those races, as well. In District 21, **Ken Haar** edged **James Arthur Jeffers** by 48 votes, according to the Secretary of State. **Colby Coash** currently maintains a narrow lead of 26 votes over **Dan Marvin** in the District 27 race.

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Other results from Legislative races that may be of interest to you...

- Five incumbents won re-election in uncontested races: **Gwen Howard** (Omaha), **Chris Langemeier** (Schuyler), **Rich Pahls** (Omaha), **Deb Fischer** (Valentine) and **Abbie Cornett** (Bellevue).
- Five incumbents won contested races: Appropriations Committee Chairman **Lavon Heidemann** (Elk Creek) defeated Jerry Joy; **Scott Lautenbaugh** (Omaha) defeated Carl Lorenzen by just two percentage points; **Speaker Flood** (Norfolk) defeated Daniel Barrows by an overwhelming margin of 88%; **Tony Fulton** (Lincoln) defeated Susan Scott by more than 2,300 votes, after edging her by only about 40 votes in the May Primary; and **LeRoy Loudon** (Ellsworth) beat Michael Jacobson handily.
- **Scott Price** (Bellevue) was the only candidate to take out an incumbent, defeating Gail Kopplin by a six percent margin.
- While some of the races to fill term-limited seats were close calls, especially the District 21 and 27 races mentioned above, others were not close. **Brenda Council** (Omaha) won by the largest margin of any newcomer, defeating her opponent 84% to 16%.
- Other newly elected senators winning by large margins were **Heath Mello** (Omaha), who garnered 67% of the vote in District 5, and **Jeremiah Nordquist** (Omaha), who won 74% in District 7.

If you want more information about the Special Session or any of these Legislative Races, please contact Andy Pollock at [apollock@remboltludtke.com](mailto:apollock@remboltludtke.com). Andy is a registered lobbyist at the Nebraska Legislature and handles campaign finance reporting for candidates.

*Election statistics taken from reports by the Nebraska Secretary of State.*

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