

**Sine Die Address**  
**Governor Dave Heineman**  
**One-Hundredth Legislature, First Session**  
**May 31, 2007**

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, distinguished guests, friends and fellow Nebraskans. I stand here today at the close of a very successful legislative session.

Five months ago, we approached this centennial session with optimism that we could find solutions to the many challenges that lay before us, and I am here today to thank you for your work. Working together, we had an exceptionally productive session.

This Legislature has been focused and results-oriented. In particular, I want to note the energy and enthusiasm of the freshman members of this body. You worked with veteran members to tackle a number of complex issues. That spirit of cooperation resulted in many impressive accomplishments.

At the beginning of the session, I outlined a number of ambitious endeavors that needed action in order to move Nebraska in a new direction. First and foremost was the need to pass significant tax relief, and restraining spending was key in providing Nebraska families with the tax relief they needed.

Together, we were able to pass the largest tax relief package in the history of this state. We collaborated on a budget that is significantly under the 5.4 percent annual growth rate of the previous decade and the 6.9 percent annual growth rate of the last two decades. Thank you for making tax relief and spending restraint top priorities.

For their achievements, I would like to recognize and thank the Chairman of the Revenue Committee, Senator Janssen, and the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Heidemann.

You also sent me significant legislation regarding Health and Human Services and water. These two very important reform efforts were necessary.

LB 296 restructured the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services in order to make this agency more effective, more efficient, and more accountable in serving the citizens of Nebraska. As Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, Senator Johnson recognized the importance of this issue and I want to thank him for his leadership.

I am very pleased that LB 701 makes substantial progress in attaining our state's goal of achieving sustainable water use throughout Nebraska. Tackling Nebraska's water issues was most certainly a daunting task, but one that could not be ignored. This was a comprehensive bill and I would like to thank Senators Loudon, Christensen, Carlson, Langemeier and others, along with the help that we received from local Natural Resources Districts and other key stakeholders.

I commend you for passing a bill that resolves the boundary and academic achievement concerns regarding school districts in the Omaha metropolitan area. LB 641 marks a turning point, and my hope is that the communication and cooperation that resulted in this landmark legislation will continue as schools, parents and teachers rededicate themselves to ensuring the children of Nebraska receive a quality education. Thank you to Senators Raikes, Chambers, Adams, Ashford, Avery, Howard, Kopplin, and Speaker Flood for your work in finding a resolution to this difficult issue.

You resolved several other critical issues. Among them was LB 564 which addressed the recreational liability concerns for public entities across our state.

With no dissenting votes, this Legislature came together to allow communities and managers of recreational areas to focus on providing residents and visitors with access to skateboard parks, bike trails, and city parks that are a vital part of tourism and recreational activities in our state. Senators Friend and Lathrop, thank you for your commitment to this issue.

Together, we provided additional funding for roads projects without increasing the gas tax. Senator Fischer, I appreciate your diligent, if not tenacious, work on LB 305.

This Legislature recognized that one of the major challenges we face in terms of higher education centers on improving our college-going rate and you took action. Senator Gay's priority bill, LB 338, increases the annual income tax deduction for those contributing to the Nebraska College Savings Plan. As part of the budget, this Legislature increased need-based scholarship aid each year during the two-year biennium.

We value education in this state, and these measures will help encourage our young people to pursue higher education. Education is only one area where this Legislature demonstrated the ability to be forward-looking when creating public policy.

Developing an expanded renewable energy plan is important to Nebraska, especially to our agriculture communities. We successfully enacted legislation that encourages electrical generation through community-owned wind turbines and provides new income tax credits for biodiesel facilities. Thank you to Senators Dierks, Preister and Langemeier.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize the work of Speaker Flood, whose leadership helped ensure that this session was a productive one. I value the working relationship and the friendship we have developed. Mr. Speaker, thank you for your outstanding leadership.

I began this session by saying that we had historic opportunities before us, and as we close today, I want to thank you for rising to the challenge. Our work is far from finished, but we end this session knowing that we have made significant strides that will benefit Nebraskans. It is a privilege to work with you. Thank you.