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**Capitol View**

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**Lawmakers Log jammed, Political Intrigue Abounds**

With lawmakers log jammed inside the State Capitol during the waning days of the short 2022 legislative session, the political intrigue outside is bubbling over.

State senators are trying compromise and downright bullishness to move along big ticket items favored by the Governor such as: tax cuts for corporations and the rich; a big ditch in Southwest Nebraska to take a fair share of allocated water from Colorado's stretch of the South Platte River; building an Okoboji-size lake between Lincoln and Omaha: building a new prison and providing continuing property tax relief.

On top of all that, is a recent attempt to give Nebraska a total ban on abortion.

Just how many of these things are possible with a few days left in the session is the perennial crapshoot that lawmakers face. The bottom line is: somebody's not going to be happy when it's all over.

Meanwhile, folks are both shocked and contemplating the resignation of longtime seated Congressman Jeff Fortenberry for three felony convictions for lying about accepting campaign funds from a foreigner.

Complicating the resignation is the fact that Nebraska's May primary election is scheduled to fall before the special election to replace the congressman. Fortenberry's name also will still be on that ballot in May.

Expect an interesting race for the Republican nomination where Mike Flood is the preferred candidate to date and will face Fortenberry’s name still on the ballot even though votes cast for him will not count.

On the Democratic side expect state senator Patty Pansing-Brooks of Lincoln to win the nod there.

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Note that Flood and Brook’s names could most likely also appear on the June special election ballot. The winner of that contest will have the power of incumbency going in to the November election, albeit that they will probably serve 2 months or less as Congress will be on break before the November election.

The November election for Congress will likely be anti-climactic at that point.

What will count in November is the gubernatorial race where pollsters currently see Charles Herbster, the so-called Falls City resident, Jim Pillen, the Norfolk area pig farmer and University of Nebraska regent, and Brett Lindstrom state senator from Omaha, as the front runners.

Interesting recent comments from the fourth candidate Theresa Thibodeaux who was formerly going to be Herbster’s lieutenant governor running mate have made the entire process even more complicated.

She complains that Herbster is too enamored of national politics to understand what is happening on the state level. That assessment is shared by several former Herbster campaign workers.

Attack campaign brochures have been funded by so-called dark money, which comes from unidentified sources. The mailing pieces point out specific flaws with each of the four front running gubernatorial candidates. These often feature catch phrases decrying stuff about immigration and being soft on crime.

The proliferation of it speaks to a really tight race and marks a sure sign of Spring in Nebraska.

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*JL Schmidt has been covering Nebraska government and politics for more than 40 years. He has been a registered Independent for more than 20 years*