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Wednesday, September 3, 2025

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‘Big Beautiful Bill’ could cost Nebraska over \$216M

ERIN BAMER  
Nebraska Examiner

LINCOLN — A report from Nebraska’s Department of Revenue projects that the federal budget reconciliation bill will cost state government more than \$216 million over the next two years.

The department released the analysis as part of a state law that requires it to report to the Nebraska Legislature within 60 days of a change to the national Internal Revenue Code. Congress’ “One Big Beautiful Bill” that passed on July 4 was the subject

of Tuesday’s report.

DOR’s analysis spanned the next four fiscal years ending in 2029. It surmised that the expected losses in corporate and individual income tax revenue will cost Nebraska more than \$406 million over those four years. Within the two years that make up the existing biennial budget, the losses would equal roughly \$216 million.

This will likely dent the state budget, but the projected impact won’t be clear until Nebraska’s Economic Forecasting Advisory Board next meets in October.

Legislative Fiscal Analyst Keisha Patent said the board will consider this report, along with several other factors, including the state’s monthly tax receipts, when making state revenue projections.

At the board’s last meeting in July, members confirmed suspicions that Nebraska was back in a projected budget deficit to the tune of about \$95 million. That, combined with Gov. Jim Pillen’s stated intent to cut Nebraska’s budget by up to 10%, will make finding revenue to support other measures like tax relief more diffi-

cult, according to Appropriations Committee Chair State Sen. Rob Clements of Elmwood.

Though the revenue losses were about double what he was expecting, Clements said even if the department’s predictions are accurate the budget will still be “manageable.” He noted that the last two months of tax receipts have been higher than the board’s projections and argued that Pillen’s budget goals could help find

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NEBRASKA

LAWMAKERS TO HOLD HEARING OVER ‘CORNHUSKER CLINK’



CHRIS MACHIAN, THE WORLD-HERALD FILE PHOTO

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Work Ethic Camp is located at 2309 US-8 in McCook, on Aug. 21, 2025. The prison will become an ICE detention facility.

ANDREW WEGLEY  
Lincoln Journal Star

Nebraska lawmakers will hold a public hearing over Republican Gov. Jim Pillen’s plan to turn a state prison into an immigration detention center after all.

Days after the Republican chair of the Legislature’s Judiciary Committee last week declined to use her post to schedule a hearing over the so-called Cornhusker Clink, a Democrat who chairs the Urban Affairs Committee moved to schedule one of his own.

Omaha Sen. Terrell McKinney, a vocal critic of Nebraska’s overcrowded prison system and of Pillen’s plan to evacuate a 200-bed state prison in McCook to make room for a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement jail, announced Tuesday that the committee he chairs will hold a hearing next week over potential building code issues at the facility.

The hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. Sept. 12 at the Capitol.

Pillen’s plan is part of ICE’s reported effort to add 41,000 deten-

tion beds to the federal system this year, including 300 beds in Nebraska, which will join states like Florida and Indiana when it opens an ICE detention center later this year.

In a letter posted to social media Tuesday, McKinney raised concerns over the capacity of the ICE center, which will be located in a state prison with the capacity to hold 125 people, according to state prison data.

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Nebraska limited to 4 medical marijuana growers

JOSH REYES  
Omaha World-Herald

LINCOLN — The Nebraska Medical Cannabis Commission approved Tuesday a new set of emergency regulations that limit the state to four cultivators and establish a three-week window for applications ahead of a state law-imposed deadline of Oct. 1 to begin approving successful applicants for the state’s medical cannabis program.

The new regulations are largely the same as the temporary ones the commission adopted in June. Those are set to expire Sept. 28. The new regulations will be in place for 90 days once the governor approves them.

The vote to approve came immediately after a lengthy closed-door executive session. While the five commissioners approved the regulations unanimously, Bruce Bailey, who serves on the commission through his role on the Liquor Control Commission, said there should be at least six cultivator licenses available.

The previous emergency regulations did not set a limit, and a proposal posted on the commission website Tuesday morning suggested there should be only two cultivators.

Lorelle Mueting said regulators in other states advised starting small and making sure to not over-saturate the market. Bailey said having more cultivators embodies free enterprise principles. He also having only two could leave patients without the supply they need or lead to ballooning costs if one cultivator’s crop fails, giving the other a monopoly.

Four was a compromise among the commission, though Bailey motioned during the vote to increase the total to six. The commission also approved a lottery system if more than four applicants qualify successfully.

The application window for cultivators will go from Sept. 4 to Sept. 23.

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