



Sunday World-Herald

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LEGISLATIVE LEFTOVERS

A look at what will happen with two key unresolved issues. **Midlands**

Medical cannabis backers take new route

Supporters seek to bypass the Nebraska Legislature with a petition drive aimed at the 2020 ballot

By **MARTHA STODDARD**
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

LINCOLN — Supporters of legalizing medical cannabis have struck out in the Nebraska Legislature for five years straight, with the latest proposal falling victim to a filibuster this spring.

In its wake, those supporters are pouring their energy into an initiative petition drive that would bypass lawmakers and take the legalization issue directly to Nebraska voters.

The response so far has been much more encouraging.

State Sen. Anna Wishart of Lincoln, a co-sponsor of the Nebraskans for Sensible Marijuana Laws petition, said people lined up to sign the petitions last weekend during circulators' first appearance at Lincoln and Omaha farmers markets.

Before the weekend was over, the volunteers had collected about 1% of the signatures needed for the drive. A volunteer in Norfolk collected 200 signatures on his own.

And 70 people responded within an hour to a call for volunteers, she said.

The petition drive aims to put a proposed constitutional amendment on the 2020 general election ballot that would give Nebraskans the right to use medical cannabis for serious medical conditions, subject to "reasonable laws, rules and regulations."

"The issue really sells itself," Wishart said. "You'd be hard-pressed to find someone in this

See *Medical cannabis*: Page 2

ANATOMY OF A SHOOTING: A THREE-PART SERIES

Today: The victim, an innocent 13-year-old boy Up Next: The suspects, five teenagers



BRENDAN SULLIVAN/THE WORLD-HERALD

BULLET NEVER MEANT FOR HIM STILL LEAVES A MARK



Erin Grace

COLUMNIST

One fateful Friday night in March, R.J. Eckhardt, 13, wanted a better view of a high school slam-dunk contest.

Tromping down the Benson High School bleachers, R.J. got a better view, all right. But the action he saw wasn't happening on the court. The seventh-grader watched as people seated in

front of him passed something. A gun. They did it surreptitiously, he said, handing off the gun behind their legs as they sat on the bleachers.

R.J., his stepbrother and a friend got scared. They told their dads, who pulled the plug on the outing. The group left early, well before the Boys and

Girls Clubs' annual high school all-star basketball event ended.

But their departure, while seemingly prudent, didn't keep them safe.

Within the hour, R.J. had been shot.

And within a few days, five suspects had been rounded up.

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R.J. Eckhardt, 13, was shot in the arm March 29 after leaving a basketball game at Benson High School with his father and stepbrother. R.J., who lives with his mother in a gated community, above, will be an eighth-grader at Westside Middle School.

Louisville coming to Omaha

Louisville is the first College World Series qualifier, and a Vanderbilt pitcher throws a no-hitter. **Sports**

All-Nebraska soccer teams

Meet the 11 boys and 11 girls selected to this year's top squad. **Sports, Pages 3-5C**

Compost firm set to pounce

Gretna company says it could offer Omahans private yard waste collection. **Midlands**

Weather

High: 71 Low: 53
Clouds, sun, t-storm Details: 8A

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