

Wightman keeps tabs from hospital

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Redistricting lines being drawn.

Bum knees have kept famous athletes off the playing field.

An infected knee is keeping one senator away from legislative chambers.

A recurring knee infection and surgery has put Sen. John Wightman in a room at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital for the last three weeks.

Since then, Wightman has been unable to vote in the Nebraska Legislature where he represents the 36th district which includes Gothenburg and most of Dawson County.

Still, Wightman watches Unicameral proceedings daily on television and keeps in touch with his office staff via telephone and visits.

Because he's minus a knee until the infection is gone and a new one can be implanted, he's wheelchair bound. A temporary spacer was inserted during the last surgery.

Wightman's battle with his left knee began in September of 2009 when he had replacement surgery.

Infection later set in which required a second surgery and another knee replacement in August of 2010.

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Because the knee became so painful, doctors removed the replacement on March 24 during surgery at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Just when the senator can return to his legislative office is uncertain.

The 90-session ends June 8.

Wightman must be in the chamber to vote on bills but can still sponsor legislation.

Last Thursday, LB388—a priority bill he’s carrying for the governor—was advanced to final reading.

The Site and Building Development Act would divert a portion of money from affordable housing funds to f

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