

## *2003 Press Releases*

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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release:  
December 29, 2003

Contact: Holley Bolen  
Phone: (402) 440-9814

## **Bruning Files Lawsuit to Stop Diploma Scam**

Omaha, NE - Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today the State filed a complaint in the Douglas County District Court against California Alternative High Schools (CAHS) and Daniel Gossai, the operator of CAHS, among others. The program offers high school diplomas to members of the Hispanic community in exchange for 30 hours of classroom work and \$575. It has been operating in Lincoln and Omaha.

“Our investigation concluded that Mr. Gossai and others have been illegally operating this business which preys on the desire to fulfill the American dream,” said Bruning. “By soliciting predominately Spanish-speakers, they targeted a population not often familiar with the required curriculum for a high school diploma.”

The complaint seeks restitution for each student and penalties of \$2000 per incident from each person named in the complaint.

Bruning added, “This type of fraud is particularly devastating because it hurts those who are working hard to improve their situation. They want an education and they don’t deserve to be victimized in pursuit of their dreams.”



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**\*\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\*\***

**Bruning to Hold Press Conference Announcing**  
**Developments in California Alternative High**  
**School Investigation**

Attorney General Jon Bruning will hold a press conference today to announce developments in the investigation of California Alternative High School. The press conference will be held at 3:00 p.m. in the Chicano Awareness Center, 4821 South 24th Street, Omaha, NE 68107.

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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release:  
December 19, 2003

Contact: Holley Bolen  
Phone: (402) 471-3888

**Bruning Announces \$2.3 Million in Household Settlement Funds to  
be Disbursed by End of Year**

(Lincoln, NE) – Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today payments to Nebraska consumers from the \$484 million settlement with Household Finance Corporation will arrive by the end of 2003. The settlement was signed by all 50 states and the District of Columbia, in a predatory lending enforcement action against Household. 3,200 Nebraska consumers will receive a combined total of \$2.3 million.

"Household deceived homeowners and now they are suffering the consequences. Predatory lending will not be tolerated," said Bruning. "This settlement provides some restitution to consumers and requires Household to implement reforms in order to prevent the unsavory practice of predatory lending."

The settlement payment each borrower will receive will be based upon the terms and conditions of each individual loan made to Nebraska consumers from January 1, 1999 through September 30, 2002.

In addition to settlement dollars, Household agreed to enact several changes in its lending practices. Court injunctions restrict prepayment penalties on loans, limit up-front points and origination fees, and improve loan disclosures.

For more information, consumers can contact the settlement administrator at [www.household-beneficial-settlement.com](http://www.household-beneficial-settlement.com) or by calling 1-888-780-2156. Consumers may also contact the Nebraska Attorney General's Office, toll-free at 1-800-727-6432.



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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release:  
December 18, 2003

Contact: Holley Bolen  
Phone: (402) 440-9814

Attorney General Bruning Announces Adoption  
of Nebraska's Proposal for Missouri River Flows

Lincoln, NE – Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that Nebraska's proposal for Missouri River flows has been adopted by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service recommended Nebraska's plan as an alternative to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposition for Missouri River flows.

In its recommendation, the Service specifically included Nebraska's suggestions for habitat creation, adaptive management, comprehensive monitoring, and reasonable flow changes at Gavins Point. The plan, which was approved by both General Bruning and Governor Johanns on December 2, 2003, was sent to other Missouri River Basin State Governors for their consideration and approval. The Governors of South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming have since added their support to Nebraska's proposal.

Nebraska requested that the proposal be applied only if the Fish and Wildlife Service found that the Corps of Engineers' plan for revising the Missouri River Master Manual posed jeopardy to species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Service found the Corps' plan would pose jeopardy to endangered species and recommended that the Corps adopt Nebraska's proposal.

"Since flow changes are necessary, we are pleased the Service has chosen to adopt Nebraska's recommendation," said Bruning. "Other flow scenarios considered would cause adverse economic impact on Nebraska interests, particularly power generation."

"This latest decision by the Service should also expedite resolution of ongoing litigation and ultimately prevent additional litigation," said Bruning.

The next step in the process is for the Corps to incorporate the Service's recommendation into the Missouri River Master Manual, which has been in revision since the late 1980s.



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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Jon Bruning  
Guest Column: December 10, 2003  
Contact: Holley Bolen (402) 471-3888

As we scramble to find the perfect gift this holiday season, it is important to be aware that with increased shopping comes an increased risk of consumer fraud and identity theft. While Internet shopping can be easy and convenient, buying online can present its own challenges and dangers. If you choose online shopping as an alternative to the crowded shopping malls, please keep these safety tips in mind:

- **Know who you're dealing with.** Confirm the online seller's physical address and phone number, and check its reputation with the Better Business Bureau.
- **Know exactly what you're buying.** Read the seller's description closely, especially the fine print.
- **Check the privacy policy.** It should let you know what personal information the company is collecting and why.
- **Pay with a credit card.** It offers you the most protection as a consumer.
- **Remember shipping and handling.** Consider shipping and handling costs, and choose a delivery that best suits your budget.
- **Know Your Rights.** The law requires retailers to ship an order within the time stated on their website. If the company cannot comply, they must give notice and allow the consumer to cancel the agreement or receive a refund.
- **Keep Good Records.** Track your purchases. Keep printouts of web pages and e-mails in case you're not satisfied.

Taking these simple steps can help ensure a safe holiday season and an enjoyable Internet shopping experience. If you think you've been a victim of consumer fraud or identity theft, please file a complaint with our Consumer Protection Division at (800) 727-6432 or (402) 471-2682 or visit us online at [www.ago.state.ne.us](http://www.ago.state.ne.us).

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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release:  
December 5, 2003

Contact: David Cookson  
Phone: (402) 430-4219

Attorney General Bruning Announces Alternative Proposal  
for Missouri River Flows

Lincoln, NE - Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that an alternative plan for Missouri River flows has been introduced to the U. S. Department of Army and U. S. Department of the Interior. The proposal, an alternative to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' proposal for Missouri River flows, calls for reasonable flow changes at Gavins Point, drought conservation measures, habitat creation, adaptive management and comprehensive monitoring. The plan has been approved by both Bruning and Gov. Mike Johanns and has been sent to other Missouri River Basin State Governors for their consideration and approval.

Nebraska's alternative plan stems from discussion originated by South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds at the Missouri River Summit last September. The proposal will only be applied in the event that the Fish and Wildlife Service finds that the Corp of Engineers' plan for revising the Missouri River Master Manual poses jeopardy to species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

"We are offering this proposal as an insurance policy," said Bruning. "Other flow scenarios we have seen would cause serious adverse economic impact to Nebraska interests, particularly power generation" said Bruning.

"In the event Fish and Wildlife determines that flow changes are required below Gavins Point Dam, we want this proposal considered as a way to meet the needs of the species without doing major harm to the other river interests," said Bruning.

"This proposal should also expedite resolution of the ongoing litigation and ultimately prevent additional litigation," said Bruning.

The process of revising the Missouri River Master Manual has been underway since the late 1980s.

Submitted to Jewish Press  
only



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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Jon Bruning  
December 4, 2003 Column  
November AIFL Award Banquet

Last month, I was honored to address the annual American-Israel Friendship League (AIFL) Partners for Democracy Awards Banquet in New York City. I was excited to have the opportunity to share my recent experiences in Israel as well as gain perspective from those who are intimately involved in supporting friendship between the United States and Israel.

In June, I, along with Attorneys General from Utah, North Dakota, Montana and Colorado, traveled to Israel with the assistance of the AIFL and the Government of Israel. For one week, we toured the country, visiting with government officials and working to gain an increased understanding of the region's culture and history. The highlight of the trip was our meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Talking with the Prime Minister was an especially moving experience and helped to shed light on the global perspectives and values held by many Israelis. The trip left me with the strong conviction that Israel is a rare beacon of peace in the Middle East, and for that it must be embraced by the United States. As long as I'm in public service, I'll do all I can to support Israel's efforts to bring peace to the region.

New York City's AIFL banquet is held each year to present the Partners in Democracy Awards. The awards recognize those honorable individuals and organizations who, in their respective fields and businesses, have distinguished themselves in their support of United States-Israel friendship. The event is a chance to recognize men, women, and entire organizations that have focused their service on strengthening international and democratic values.

I was thrilled to be a part of a program with such admirable and prominent members of our nation's Jewish community. Sharing some of my most treasured memories of my trip to Israel at the AIFL banquet was a tremendously humbling experience and one that I won't soon forget.



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**JON BRUNING**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

For Immediate Release:  
December 2, 2003

Contact: Holley Bolen  
Phone: (402) 471-3888

## **Treasurer Byrd to Resign**

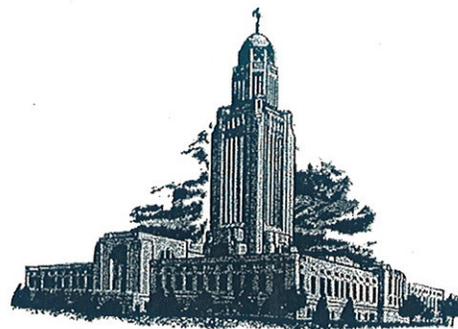
Lincoln, NE - Attorney General Jon Bruning announced today that State Treasurer Lorelee Byrd has agreed to resign her position as state treasurer. In negotiations with her attorneys this morning, Bruning secured her resignation by agreeing to request that the court move her sentencing date from January 29<sup>th</sup>, to December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Her resignation will be effective January 6<sup>th</sup>.

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# STATE OF NEBRASKA

**Lorelee Byrd**  
*State Treasurer*

[www.treasurer.org](http://www.treasurer.org)



December 2, 2003

Governor Mike Johanns  
State Capitol  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509

Dear Governor:

After careful consideration I wanted to let you know that I resign my position as State Treasurer effective January 6, 2004 at 5:00 p.m.

As I explained to you earlier this week I feel it is necessary to provide time for a smooth transition. Current staff can be interviewed and informed of their status. This will provide them adequate time to pursue other opportunities if necessary. New staff can be brought on board and fully trained before January 6, 2004.

As the end of the year approaches several key areas of the office are affected. Namely child support and alimony payments tend to increase, enrollment increases in the College Savings Plan and Unclaimed Property processes incoming holder reports. Treasury Management staff are responsible for processing important payments to political subdivisions at the end of December. We remain committed to providing the highest level of service possible to the taxpayers during the transition.

It has been a pleasure to work in state government and serve my fellow Nebraskans. We have so much to be proud of and I am thankful that I had an opportunity to serve as State Treasurer and accomplish so much. Assets in the College Savings Plan were \$20 million when I became State Treasurer---I worked hard to improve and strengthen our College Savings Plan and assets now total approximately \$500 million. Unclaimed Property was returned at new record levels. Technology increased our efficiencies in every area and we worked with you to transition the entire child support collection and disbursement system.

God bless you and your family as you prepare to celebrate Christ's birth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorelee Byrd".

Lorelee Byrd  
State Treasurer