

# Douglas County Voters' Guide Statewide General Election

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER OMAHA

Election Date: November 3, 2020

Visit [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) for additional candidate information.  
Visit [lwvgo.org](http://lwvgo.org) for printable PDF versions of the Voters' Guide.

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HEARTLAND WORKERS CENTER

The Heartland Workers Center (HWC) has produced a Spanish-language candidate profile. The questions asked of candidates are separate from those asked by the League of Women Voters. The candidate profile can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.heartlandworkerscenter.org/candidates-profile-douglas-sarpy>

## US President

Note: All qualified presidential candidates were invited to provide biographical information and responses to specific questions. Candidates were qualified if they met the following criteria during the primary season:

1. The candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for President.
2. The candidate must meet the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the Federal Elections Commission website.
3. The candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes

Responses were limited to a specific number of characters and were truncated thereafter. If a candidate did not respond by the date of publication, "Candidate has not yet responded." is printed.

**Joe Biden (D):** Campaign Website: <http://www.joebiden.com>

**Donald Trump (R):** Candidate has not yet responded.

The following candidate qualified for the Nebraska state ballot according to the Secretary of State of Nebraska but did not meet the LWVEF criteria for inclusion in the Voters' Guide:

**Jo Jorgensen (L)**

### WHAT ACTIONS WOULD YOU TAKE TO BALANCE PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE US, BOTH IN LIGHT OF COVID-19 AND FOR THE LONG TERM?

**Joe Biden:** It's a false choice to think we have to choose between our public health and economy; they're linked. On Day One, I'll implement the COVID strategy I've laid out since March –surging testing and protective gear; distributing vaccines safely and free of politics; helping schools and small businesses cover costs; and getting state and local governments resources to keep educators, cops, and firefighters on the job. I'll respect science and tell the truth, period. And I'll build our economy back better, creating millions of good-paying jobs. I'll revitalize manufacturing, build a clean energy economy, and boost caregiving – easing the squeeze on working families, providing paid leave, and getting caregivers the respect and pay they deserve.

**Donald Trump:** Candidate has not yet responded.

### WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING OUR COUNTRY AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO ADDRESS IT DURING YOUR FIRST 100 DAYS IN OFFICE?

**Joe Biden:** Pandemic. Recession. Racial injustice. Climate change. We're facing historic crises; we have to tackle them all at once. Character and experience count. I'll listen to scientists, tell the truth, and make sure we're never so unprepared for a pandemic again. I'll expand the Affordable Care Act, lowering costs and making health care a right for all. I'll build our economy back better, and make racial equity central to recovery. In these crises, we have an enormous opportunity, if we come together. As President, I'll draw on the best of us, not the worst. I'll work as hard for those who don't support me as for those who do. That's a president's job: to represent us all. To take responsibility. To protect the nation. To unite and to heal.

**Donald Trump:** Candidate has not yet responded.

### HOW WILL YOU ADDRESS RACIAL INJUSTICE IN OUR COUNTRY ON DAY ONE OF YOUR ADMINISTRATION?

**Joe Biden:** America is at an inflection point. It's past time to end our inequities and deal with the denial of our nation's promise to too many for too long. I'll fight to end the health inequities that COVID-19 amplifies; and give every child the same strong start in life by offering universal Pre-K, tripling funding for Title I schools, and making public college debt-free for most families. I'll make racial equity central to our recovery, closing the racial wealth and income gaps, boosting home ownership, and investing in communities and entrepreneurs of color –building a stronger, more inclusive middle class for the future. And, I'll work for real police reform and invest in shifting our criminal justice focus from incarceration to prevention.

**Donald Trump:** Candidate has not yet responded.

### WHAT ASPECTS OF OUR CURRENT IMMIGRATION POLICY WILL YOUR ADMINISTRATION ADDRESS FIRST?

**Joe Biden:** My immigration policy is built around keeping families together. It's past time to reform our broken system, restoring family unification and diversity as its core pillars. As President, I'll reverse Trump's assault on our values on Day One, ending his cruel border policies that rip children from their mothers' arms. I'll act immediately to protect Dreamers and their families, and invest real political capital in finally delivering legislative immigration reform, with a roadmap to citizenship for the nearly 11 million undocumented people who already do so much to make our communities strong. We have to enforce our laws, but in a way that's humane, respects due process, honors our values, and sees the big picture.

**Donald Trump:** Candidate has not yet responded.

## WHAT WILL YOU DO OVER THE LONG TERM TO ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL?

**Joe Biden:** This pandemic makes clear: All Americans need access to quality, affordable health insurance. That's why I'll protect and build on the Affordable Care Act. I helped to secure the final key votes to pass that landmark law, protecting 100 million Americans who can no longer be turned away or denied coverage for pre-existing conditions, and bringing coverage to 20 million more. As President, I'll build on that progress with a public option and lower health care and prescription drug costs. I'll make all COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines free; double funding for community health centers that are so often on the frontlines of care; and much more.

**Donald Trump:** Candidate has not yet responded.

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## US SENATE

**Chris Janicek (D):** Occupation: -Owner of CakeBox and CupCake Omaha -Property Investor. Education: -Mary Our Queen Catholic -Archbishop Ryan High School -University of NE - Omaha. Current Public Office, dates held: None. Past Public Office, dates held: None. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: -Youth Emergency Services -Nebraska Aids Project - Big Brothers/Sisters -Stephen Center -Open Door Mission

**Ben Sasse (R):** No response received

**Gene Siadek (L):** No response received

## WHAT, IF ANYTHING, SHOULD CONGRESS DO TO PROTECT THE U.S. VOTING SYSTEM FROM FOREIGN INFLUENCE?

**Chris Janicek:** We must invest in our election infrastructure to protect the integrity of our elections. Congress' primary focus needs to be securing our elections from foreign influence. 17 U.S. intelligence agencies found Russia interfered and attempted to influence the 2016 elections with most agreeing that they did influence the outcome. Russia itself announced it plans to do it again in 2020. Robert Muller's report stated "they are doing it as we speak."

The federal government must act with the urgency, force and funding that this threat to our democracy deserves. The threats of cyber attacks on paperless voting machines has to be addressed immediately. Congress must put a plan together to protect back-end election management systems with paper audit trails. A national law requiring all votes to be recorded on paper would be the easiest fix. States then will be required to conduct statistically sound, risk-limiting audits after every election so the results of our votes are accurate.

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO LESSEN THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

**Chris Janicek:** Science backed evidence establishes that climate change is real. Under this current administration we can forecast more attacks on the environment right now and in the future. I will work tirelessly in challenging the lawlessness of environmental protections being lifted and work towards reducing carbon emissions and clean water legislation. I will advocate relentlessly for solutions that will protect people, farms, animals and the planet, now and for the future. The United States must re-enter the Paris climate agreement and work with other countries on a global scale. We must invest in wind energy, solar, geo-thermal, nuclear, hydro and all other forms of green energy. We must stop new fossil fuel exploration and phase out leaking and polluting pipelines. Our environment is suffering, wildlife is struggling with a loss of habitat and starving. We cannot wait, we must take action now. We must elect better representatives. I want a democracy to live in and a planet to live on.

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON IMMIGRATION POLICY?

**Chris Janicek:** Our current immigration policy is not working and is a violation of human rights and current immigration law. Immigrants crossing the border through legal ports of entry seeking asylum should be documented and within 48 hours have a legal decision on residency. It is costing the U.S. taxpayer hundreds of \$millions and destroying families and lives in detaining immigrants that could be integrated into our workforce and economy. They are coming here in search of a better life. Immigrants who cross the border illegally should be exposed to our legal system to determine eligibility for documentation and/or returned to their country. Those that break and violate our laws should be deported. The United States has close to 900,000 DACA (deferred action for early childhood arrivals) protected immigrants. This protection could be revoked at any time under the current administration. I advocate putting all DACA members on a path to citizenship. The U.S. is the only home they have known.

## WHAT, IF ANY, CHANGES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR "SENSIBLE GUN LEGISLATION"?

**Chris Janicek:** The 2nd Amendment protects the right of gun ownership. I respect this amendment. Over 90% of Americans, including gun owners, support common sense gun laws. I am for enforcing the laws we currently have and recommend the following: 1) Root out the problems that make guns too easy to obtain, regulating easy, unrestricted access. 2) Background checks on all purchases. 3) Registration on all owned firearms. 4) Gun training and a certificate or license to own and operate. Compare to driver's education and license. 5) Insurance on guns in case of an accident. 6) National assault weapon registry and off premise "assault weapon library" storage with check out accessibility.

## NEBRASKA US HOUSE OF REP - DISTRICT 2

**Don Bacon (R):** <http://donjbacon.com> Current Public Office, dates held: *Representative, Nebraska's Second District 2017 - current* Education: *Masters, National War College; MBA, University of Phoenix; BA, Northern Illinois University Military* Experience: *29.5 years in United States Air Force; Retired as Brigadier General; Five time commander, including Ramstein and Offutt; Four deployments; Former Director of ISR Strategy, Plans, Doctrine and Force Development, AF/A2, Headquarters of USAF, Pentagon* Volunteer Experience: *My volunteerism has included the following: - USAF Academy Advisory Board - VP, Air Force Association, Aksarben Chapter - Chaplain, Nebraska Military Officers Association of America - Boy Scout Merit Badge University Instructor - Life member VFW*

**Kara Eastman (D):** <http://www.eastmanforcongress.com> Past Public Office, dates held: *Metropolitan Community College Board of Governors 2015-2019* Education: *MSW Loyola U; BA Pitzer College* Military Experience: *none* Volunteer Experience: *She has been a board member of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands and has served as an appointed member of the Mayor of Omaha's Fair Housing Advisory Board.*

**Tyler Schaeffer (L):** Libertarian party candidate.

### WHAT, IF ANYTHING, SHOULD CONGRESS DO TO PROTECT THE U.S. VOTING SYSTEM FROM FOREIGN INFLUENCE?

**Don Bacon:** As a retired USAF intelligence general officer who oversaw cyber intelligence training for the Air Force, this is an area of concern that I take seriously and have taken actions in our defense. There are three areas of concern with election security and foreign influence: election ballot hacking, social media influence operations, and hacking into candidate emails with intent to undermine those candidates. Congress has a role to defend our voting process from foreign influence, but that does not include taking control of elections away from the states, staying in compliance with our Constitution. I've cosponsored bills to strengthen cyber-security, which gave over \$800 million to states to shore up their election systems. I cosponsored the Honest Ads Act which increases transparency into social media ads and reduces foreign intelligence capabilities in this area. My three decades of experience in cybersecurity and intelligence makes me a key voice in Congress on national security.

**Kara Eastman:** We need to invest in our Democracy, which means investing in election security. I support a government which is efficient and transparent. The current administration has too many ties to large corporations, not to mention business arrangements with some of our foreign adversaries. Similarly, my Republican opponent accepts a great deal of corporate PAC money from special interests. This is wrong, and I will not accept

corporate PAC dollars. I also think "dark" money should not be allowed to corrupt our elections. Therefore, I stand against the 2010 Supreme Court decision Citizens United. Gerrymandering must be ended, and citizen commissions should draw fair, non-partisan districts. Participation in our electoral democracy must be increased through automatic voter registration and by ending voter suppression tactics. Finally, I have seen how difficult it is for candidates who do not come from wealth to raise funds and want to move toward public funding of federal election campaigns.

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO LESSEN THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE?

**Don Bacon:** I believe climate change is real and happening. I am a strong supporter of renewable energy and I led the efforts in the U.S. House to reinstate tax credits for its producers. In fact, I was called the "Champion of Wind Energy" by leaders of renewable energy in Omaha. I believe in incentivizing behavior we want, not using punishments. I believe in the "all of the above" approach so that our nation expands in renewable energy, but also so that we become energy independent. With these incentives, our free market system and innovation have enabled America to reduce carbon emissions more than the next 12 countries combined, while becoming the largest energy producer in the world. American natural gas has been part of this success and it burns 40% cleaner than Europe's. I also support battery storage and carbon capture research to expand our renewable energy capabilities. I oppose carbon taxes that will raise gas prices, utilities costs and air fares, and that falls unfairly on the poor.

**Kara Eastman:** Climate change is the number one moral and security threat our nation faces. We must reorient our environmental and economic policies to meet this incredible challenge and once again become a global leader in innovation and sustainability. Following the 2020 elections, we must get back into international agreements like the Paris Agreement and then aggressively update them to bring down carbon emissions. In the meantime, wind and solar must be harnessed as clean energy options, especially here in Nebraska. I will fight for a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, getting to net-zero by 2040, and a 100% clean energy plan for America.

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON IMMIGRATION POLICY?

**Don Bacon:** When I first ran for Congress I supported a pathway for DACA recipients when many in my party did not. I was one of seven GOP representatives who asked the President to reconsider his policy on DACA, and he subsequently modified his views. I support allowing those with TPS protections to stay in the country legally while they pursue citizenship, because they have contributed to society and proven to be good neighbors. I was also one of the GOP representatives to ask the President to stop the policy of family separations (which was started in previous

Administration) and he subsequently shifted to a more humane policy, while still protecting children who are being trafficked or in custody of adults wanted for previous crimes. I support E-Verify and better border controls, including a targeted border wall, to reduce illegal immigration and human/drug trafficking. Evidence exists that walls work. In the end, we must support legal immigration and respect those who naturalize the legal way.

**Kara Eastman:** NE-CD2 has over 100,000 immigrants who contribute to key sectors of our economy and help build the fabric of our diverse community. The current administration's policies of separating families, imprisoning babies without access to basic needs, and rounding up hard-working immigrants is immoral and un-American. They are more concerned with scoring political points with their base than they are with border security. Now is the time for us to make significant investments in smart technology, work-force development, and foreign aid. Other solutions that transform our immigration system include hiring more immigration judges and fully staffing ports of entry. We must make law-abiding Dreamers citizens and ensure that immigrants who follow the law can earn a lawful presence in our country.

**WHAT, IF ANY, CHANGES WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR "SENSIBLE GUN LEGISLATION"?**

**Don Bacon:** The best thing we can do to reduce senseless gun violence is to enforce laws already on the books. Criminals don't follow laws, so creating new ones won't have an impact. Instead, we should focus on enforcement of existing laws. I've worked closely with the law enforcement community on legislation they say will be of the greatest benefit in reducing gun violence, like straw purchases (when someone buys a gun for an individual who is not allowed to have one) and stronger information fusion centers, which allow law enforcement agencies to better communicate with each other regarding threats. Our own Omaha Chief of Police says the most important action we can take to reduce gun violence in Omaha is enforce the Straw Purchase Laws, which are not being enforced now and leads to dangerous felons getting firearms illegally. I supported the Stop School Violence Act that passed, and led efforts to fund these needed programs.

**Kara Eastman:** As a mom, I am outraged by the lack of movement we have seen in the country on this issue. Groups like the NRA have commandeered the discussion. This is a public health menace, and common-sense solutions are supported by 85 to 90% of Americans. Universal background checks, mandatory waiting periods, smart technology, age requirements, and a ban on the sale of weapons of war would help ensure our children are not gunned down in their schools or playgrounds. Priorities: The vast majority of private sales (including gun shows and online) must fall under the existing background check umbrella. We must end the gun show loophole. All gun purchases should be subject to the same background check standards. I support raising the minimum

age to buy a firearm to 21 years old. We need to keep guns out of the hands of young people, and this is a good way to do it.

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 05**

**Gilbert Ayala (R):** No response received

**Mike McDonnell (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska State Senator Legislative Dist. 5 January 2017-Present* Past Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska State Senator Legislative Dist. 5, January 2017-Present* Education: *Masters in Public Administration Bachelors in Criminal Justice Associate Degree in Fire Protection Technology* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Knights of Columbus Council 10184 Saint Thomas More Festival Committee*

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**Mike McDonnell:** Yes! I would like to adopt a more nonpartisan approach similar to what the State of Iowa has done. We could use a nonpartisan state agency and an outside advisory commission to draw the districts.

**HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**Mike McDonnell:** Reducing recidivism will reduce overcrowding. I introduced 2 bills this year that will help accomplish this. LB 1096 will be a private public partnership to teach skilled trade classes, to people within 18 months of being released from prison. LB 1097 will double the size of the current young adult court, which is a problem solving court. This court works with people age 18-26 to help with employment and addressing other issues to keep them out of the Nebraska prison system.

**DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID? IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**Mike McDonnell:** No!

**SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Mike McDonnell:** Yes! I believe there should be limits on the amount of money individuals and organizations can spend on political campaigns. Based on not letting an individual or organization have more political influence.

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Mike McDonnell:** Yes! I believe Nebraska workers should receive paid leave to deal with their own serious health conditions, and mothers should receive paid maternity leave following the birth or adoption of a child.

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 07**

**Jorge Sotolongo (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None*  
Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Saint Louis University Master's Degree in Business Administration from University of Nebraska at Omaha*  
Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Mayor Stothert's Millennial Advisory Committee (3 years)*

**Tony Vargas (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska Legislature, District 7 (January 2017 - Present); Member, Appropriations Committee; Chair, Legislature's Planning Committee; Vice Chair, Executive Board of the Legislative Council*  
Past Public Office, dates held: *Omaha Public Schools Board of Education, Subdistrict 9 (Dates: October 2013 - December 2016)*  
Education: *Bachelors of Arts, University of New York - Rochester; Masters of Education, Pace University*  
Military Experience: *None*  
Volunteer Experience: *Board Member, NE Children's Home Society; Member, Douglas Co. Community Response; Board Member, South Omaha Business Assoc. (SOBA); Member, Dahlman Neighborhood Assoc.; Member, Sons of Italy and GI Forum; Eucharistic Minister, St. Francis Cabrini*

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**Jorge Sotolongo:** I am in favor of a fair, balanced, and bipartisan process of redistricting. The question is whether an independent body, outside of the legislature, would do a better, more equitable, job of redistricting. There may be constitutional implications and/or hurdles to this type of decision. If the legislative committee can uphold transparency and bipartisanship, I support its activities, but would also suggest the involvement of outside experts like the Metro Area Planning Agency.

**Tony Vargas:** Nebraska has a long history of supporting fairness, transparency, and nonpartisanship in government. Our current redistricting process is contrary to that culture. Allowing politicians to draw political district lines leads to partisanship and an erosion of confidence in government. I would support recent movements to put that process in the hands of an independent commission. If an independent commission is not successful, I will work to make the process better within the Legislature.

**HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**Jorge Sotolongo:** Despite alternative solutions that seek to relieve the number of incarcerated individuals in Nebraska, several of which I do support, I still believe we will need to build new facilities in the future. For example, changes to restrictive housing alone will necessitate more space. Construction of new facilities raises questions about staffing, construction costs, operating expenses, and how these facilities will improve our current system.

**Tony Vargas:** Our prisons are dangerously over capacity and have been for some time, which is dangerous for both staff and inmates. At its root, this is a problem in our justice system. We need to focus more on community based solutions, like diversion programming and other alternative courts, which have proven to be cost effective ways to reduce recidivism and keep people out of jail. If these things don't change, we'll just keep needing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to build more prisons.

**DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID, IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**Jorge Sotolongo:** As a Hispanic citizen, I hope to be a unique, informed, and pragmatic voice for District 7's Hispanic constituents. This involves supporting policies that help newly arrived residents to feel part of our community. Obtaining proper ID and other official documents can be daunting, but ultimately important for creating a sense of belonging and peace of mind. My plan would be to consult the data on voter fraud and voting patterns in District 7, in order to come to a fair decision on voter ID.

**Tony Vargas:** I do not support Voter ID legislation or any measures that would make it more difficult for Nebraskans to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

**SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Jorge Sotolongo:** As a candidate, I have familiarized myself with Nebraska's rules and guidelines enforced by the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. I have been pleased by the level of transparency that these rules provide. I will continually assess these guidelines and practices, as I move forward.

**Tony Vargas:** Most candidates for public office are required to file regular reports that show where their money comes from and how it is spent. The biggest gap in that transparency is for other groups that spend money on our elections, in support of or in opposition to a candidate or ballot initiative. Voters deserve to have that information at their fingertips, just as it is present for candidates for elected office, and I would support increasing those reporting requirements.

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Jorge Sotolongo:** I think paid family leave is extremely important, because it allows families to care for their loved ones without fear. However, a universal mandate for paid family leave would be detrimental to many small businesses in my district. The demand for better maternity/paternity leave and other paid leave has increased in the market, and companies continue to respond to these demands, in order to remain competitive. I support solutions that incentivize employers to continue this trend.

**Tony Vargas:** Absolutely. The entire country needs a paid family medical leave program. Every worker will go through a time when they need time off to care for themselves or a loved one. No one's household financial stability should be endangered by illness or welcoming a new little one into their family.

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 09**

**John Cavanaugh (D):**

Education: *B.A. - Catholic University of America M.A. - Environmental Policy from Vermont Law School J.D. - Vermont Law School* Volunteer Experience: *ModeShift Omaha, Aksarben/Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association*

**Marque Snow (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *Omaha Public Schools Board Member May 2013 - Present Board Vice President January 2017 - January 2018 Board President January 2018 - Present* Education: *University of South Dakota, B.S. Political Science & History 2011* Volunteer Experience: *100 Black Men of Omaha (Mentor) African Culture Connection (Board Member) Huespring Omaha (Advisory Board Member)*

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**John Cavanaugh:** Yes, we need a nonpartisan redistricting process independent of elected officials. The people of the district should pick their elected official and not the other way around. I would support a nonpartisan commission to draft all election districts. I would further support nonpartisan elections for all state and federal offices in Nebraska as well.

**Marque Snow:** Yes,

**HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**John Cavanaugh:** We can not build our way out of a prison overcrowding crisis. We need to address the root causes of crime and incarceration. We need to start with investing in early childhood education. Increase access to health care and mental healthcare for children and adults. We must increase access to Drug and Alcohol treatment. The jail and prison system should not

be the only place people can get treatment. We also need sentencing reform and to change our approach to non-violent offenses.

**Marque Snow:** Prison reform

**DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID, IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**John Cavanaugh:** No, we should be making it easier to vote, not harder. Voter ID disenfranchises the poor and those less able to get a state ID. If elected, I will advocate for Universal Vote By Mail. It is safer and less expensive than traditional voting in person. It is also more secure. Universal Vote By Mail has the added benefit of giving people the time to sit at their dinner table with their ballots and the League of Women Voters' guide to do their research.

**Marque Snow:** No

**SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**John Cavanaugh:** Yes, money has a corrupting influence on anyone, and the need to raise large sums of money perverts the purpose of elections, which is to communicate with voters. Some money is necessary to communicate effectively. Individuals should be able to contribute to campaigns, but corporations and unidentified entities should not be able to spend money on behalf of candidates. If elected, I would work to amend the Constitution to repeal the Citizens United opinion and get dark money out of politics.

**Marque Snow:** Yes, lobby and interest groups

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**John Cavanaugh:** Yes, the recent Covid-19 crisis has laid bare the weaknesses in our society. People go to work when they are sick, risking the health of everyone around them because they can not miss a paycheck. Now, we have a glaring example of what advocates for family leave have been saying for years. We need family medical leave to help the individual but also to protect the rest of society.

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 11**

**Fred Conley (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *1999-Present Papio NRD Board* Past Public Office, dates held: *1988: Interim Mayor - Omaha 1981-1993: Omaha City Council Member 2005-2016 Metropolitan Community College Board* Education: *1966 High School - Omaha North High 1976 B.S. Psychology & Sociology 1980 J.D.*

*Creighton Law School Military Experience: 1967-1970 Air Force – Sergeant Volunteer Experience: Served as a member of the Sierra Club, a board member of the Charles Drew Health Center, President of the North Omaha Foundation and was a founding member of the 100 Black Men of Omaha.*

**Terrell McKinney (D):**

Education: *Creighton University School of Law, 1L Masters of Business Administration, Midland University Bachelors of Science, Sport Business Management, Maryville University St Louis*  
Volunteer Experience: *Black Men United - 2016 - Present At Large Board Member. Ready RP Nationals Wrestling Team, 2016 - Present Assistant wrestling coach. Policy Research & Innovation, 2019 - Present Board Member*

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**Fred Conley:** Prior to my election to City Council in the 1980s, I fought for district level elections in Omaha and Nebraska as a community activist. The creation of fair districts is an issue I am passionate about and it directly impacts my district. I support an independent commission for redistricting after the 2020 Census. I will support any legislation that guarantees a nonpartisan approach.

**Terrell McKinney:** Yes, its needed to ensure districts aren't slighted in one parties favor and to also make sure Nebraskans are actually represented by members of their community. This is also needed to make sure communities like North Omaha aren't neglected economically. District 11 is a minority majority and its important that we keep it that way. Lines have been drawn in the past to get individuals elected and to also limit change in our state. The good life is needed for all Nebraskans not just a few.

**HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**Fred Conley:** Criminal justice reform is long overdue in Nebraska. We do not need to build more prisons; we need to find solutions to reduce the number of prisoners. One avenue is to prevent non-violent offenders from going to prison and instead focus on rehabilitation to reduce recidivism.

**Terrell McKinney:** Prison overcrowding should be addressed by taking a hard look at the system itself there is a need for change inside and outside of our local jails and prisons. We first have to look at the root causes poverty, unemployment, mental health, housing, and the over policing of North and South Omaha. Our state must begin to rethink sentencing guidelines, ending cash bail, making probation and parole less punitive, programming inside prisons, re-entry, and police accountability.

**DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID, IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**Fred Conley:** No – we should remove any and every barrier to voting.

**Terrell McKinney:** No, there is no need for voter ID.

**SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Fred Conley:** Yes, there should be increased restrictions on money in politics. Currently, we have no transparency in the system. Whatever restrictions were appropriate prior to the Citizens United decision are a good starting point.

**Terrell McKinney:** I think we have to look at money in politics and how its being used to stifle change in our state and country. We have to ensure that candidates are committed to their respective communities once elected and not making decisions based on who contributed to their campaigns. We need to either limit the impact super pacs can have on politics or provide resources to candidates especially candidates of color that lack resources/connections.

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Fred Conley:** Yes, there should be a paid family medical leave program. Many people are currently left without access to sick leave. This puts working-class families in a vulnerable position when someone becomes ill or injured. A reasonable duration of leave (12+ weeks) is appropriate and legislation ought to protect workers so they can use their leave when needed without risk to their employment. There are examples in place and it protects families during times of uncertainty.

**Terrell McKinney:** Yes, its needed so families can have a security blanket in times of need and also as a tool to attract business and talent to our state.

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 13**

**Justin T. Wayne (D):** No response received

**STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 31**

**Rich Pahls (R):** No response received

**Tim Royers (D):** Education: *Bachelor of Science in Social Science Education, Master of Arts in History, Master of Science in Educational Leadership and Administration* Volunteer Experience: *YMCA, Volunteer Coach Teen Center, Volunteer Instructor*

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**Tim Royers:** Yes. We need an independent commission to draft any modifications to political boundaries for the Legislature to

approve. The redistricting process should be designed to be as non-partisan as possible.

#### **HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**Tim Royers:** Thoroughly examining sentencing guidelines, and assessing what we currently offer to assist people in completing their sentences so they can successfully return to the community and have gainful employment. Reducing recidivism is critical to addressing prison overcrowding.

#### **DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID, IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**Tim Royers:** No, voter id is unnecessary. There is no evidence to indicate that there is any kind of voter fraud that would necessitate an ID requirement. More importantly, ID requirements have the potential to disenfranchise. And unless those IDs are provided free of cost, such a requirement could potentially violate the 24th amendment.

#### **SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Tim Royers:** Yes. This would really necessitate work at the federal level to overturn the current precedent established by Citizens United v. FEC

#### **DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Tim Royers:** Yes. The current COVID-19 outbreak has exposed a significant vulnerability with the lack of family leave impacting the community. We need paid family leave to not only help with the health and economic security of those people that would use those days, but also for the benefit of everyone else in the community.

### **STATE LEGISLATURE - DISTRICT 39**

**Allison Heimes (D):** Education: *JD, Creighton University School of Law MS, Creighton University BA, University of Nebraska at Omaha* Military Experience: *Military Spouse* Volunteer Experience: *Foodbank of the Heartland, Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Kim Foundation, Attorney of the Day for immigrant kids, Honor and Remember, etc.*

**Lou Ann Linehan (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *State Senator, Legislative District 39 including Elkhorn, Valley, Waterloo and portions of Millard and West Omaha, elected 2016; chair, Legislature's Revenue Committee, elected 2019* Past Public Office, dates held: *none* Education: *attended University of*

*Nebraska-Lincoln and University of Nebraska at Omaha; Lewiston (Nebraska) High School* Military Experience: *None/ While working for the U.S. Department of State, Lou Ann was assigned to Iraq several times between 2008 and 2012 where she worked closely with the U.S. Military.* Volunteer Experience: *St Patrick's Catholic Church, Elkhorn; Women's Center for Advancement of Omaha, 2014 Distinguished Honoree; City Charter Review; Cable Television Board; past president, Meyer Board Auxiliary; treasurer, Parent Teacher Assoc; CCD education teacher*

#### **DOES NEBRASKA NEED TO CHANGE ITS METHOD OF REDISTRICTING? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**Allison Heimes:** We need to use algorithmically derived district remapping that optimizes the creation of new districts based on equal numbers of voters and compactness and avoid the anti-democratic practice of gerrymandering.

**Lou Ann Linehan:** Redistricting is a specific and clear duty of Nebraska's non-partisan Unicameral Legislature. In fact, Article III Section 5 of Nebraska's State Constitution explicitly places this authority with the Legislature with the following sentence: The Legislature shall redistrict the state after each federal decennial census. I do not support delegating this duty outside the Legislature where the State Constitution clearly and appropriately places this authority.

#### **HOW SHOULD THE PROBLEM OF PRISON OVERCROWDING BE HANDLED?**

**Allison Heimes:** Is the primary function of prison to punish individuals for misdeeds or is it to rehabilitate people who have taken a wrong turn in life? I believe prison's primary function is to rehabilitate individuals so that they can rejoin society. Thus, we need to create rehabilitative programs and provide mental health treatment to inmates. We can limit the amount of people in prison for non-violent drug offenses and offenses related to mental illness if we address the root causes of criminal behavior.

**Lou Ann Linehan:** The solution is more beds and adequate programming for inmates who will re-enter society after prison. In the last two years more beds have been added including a 100 bed dormitory and a 160-bed work-release facility for women. One hundred beds are under construction at the State Penitentiary, and work has begun on a 64-bed facility for elderly and mentally ill inmates. The Legislature has also approved 384 more beds at the Lincoln Correctional Center for the state's worst-behaving inmates.

#### **DO YOU FEEL THERE IS A NEED FOR VOTER ID, IF SO WHY AND HOW SHOULD IT BE IMPLEMENTED?**

**Allison Heimes:** No, there should not be any barriers to voting. It is my opinion, that in addition to no voter ID laws, election day should be a national holiday so that everyone can participate in their civic duty. In light of the pandemic, we should normalize having the election commission send out vote by mail applications

as a reminder for people to vote. We should install more drop-boxes for ballots.

**Lou Ann Linehan:** According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, as of December 31, 2019 a total of 36 states have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification. Voter identification laws are intended to prevent in-person voter impersonation and increase confidence in the election process, and I agree with those objectives. However, these laws cannot infringe on individual voter rights or serve as a discriminatory poll tax so they must be implemented carefully.

**SHOULD THERE BE INCREASED RESTRICTIONS ON MONEY IN POLITICS? WHY OR WHY NOT AND WHAT SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS WOULD YOU SUPPORT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Allison Heimes:** We need campaign finance reform. I have many ideas on this matter, but to keep my answer brief and to the point, we need to have a ceiling on how much money can be raised total. Ceilings would prevent incumbents from being able to out-raise challengers before it's even an election year, they would prevent big companies and millionaires from being able to buy elections, and it would even the playing field for candidates who aren't wealthy, but who truly want to advocate for their districts.

**Lou Ann Linehan:** Nebraska candidates disclose all contributions and expenses over \$250 and non-individuals, including corporations, also report contributions in excess of \$250. These requirements provide transparency for how campaigns are funded. Adding restrictions on campaign contributions increases the likelihood contributions will end up in dark money organizations which lack any transparency. Consequently, I oppose more restrictions which would increase unregulated, unaccountable campaign spending.

**DOES NEBRASKA NEED A PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE PROGRAM? WHY OR WHY NOT? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Allison Heimes:** The healthcare system we currently have is not ideal. It is difficult to find affordable insurance, hospitals bill high amounts for basic treatments, and few employers offer paid sick leave, so when an individual gets sick it is catastrophic for a family. Medical emergencies bankrupt families. We need to offer a parachute for suffering families. If your reasons for running for office don't include taking care of your constituents and their families, then you aren't running for the right reasons

**Lou Ann Linehan:** Many large employers offer paid family medical leave and I applaud them for choosing to do so. What many employers have found is that in order to compete for employees they need to offer an attractive benefits package including things like paid family medical leave. However, many smaller employers can find it cost prohibitive to offer this benefit and I don't support imposing a mandate that would hurt small businesses which are the backbone of our state's economy.

**BOARD OF REGENTS UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - DISTRICT 2**

**Mike Kennedy (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: Millard School Board Member 2003 to Present, Omaha Public Library Board Trustee 2015 to Present. Past Public Office, dates held: Metro College Board Member 1999 to 2003, City of Omaha Charter Review Commission 2013, City of Omaha Naming Committee 2015 to 2017. Education: Juris Doctorate from Creighton University School of Law, Bachelors of Science from University of Nebraska-Omaha, High School Diploma from Creighton Preparatory High School. Military experience: none. Volunteer experience: I have volunteered at many community organizations over the years including the Boy Scouts of America, Millard Public Schools, and the Catholic Church

**Jack A. Stark (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: None. Past Public Office, dates held: none. Education: B.A. Philosophy- St. Francis Seminary. M.A. Counseling Psychology UNL Ph.D. Counseling Psychology. UNL. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: Ak-Sar-Ben Award for thousands of hours of volunteer mental health counseling, UNL and Creighton sports teams, 1000 presentations to churches, schools and non profits, National President of Disability Association and Community Foundation assistance

**WHAT ROLE DOES THE FIRST AMENDMENT HAVE ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES?**

**Mike Kennedy:** The 1st Amendment plays a vital role on our college campuses. A college campus is designed for learning and the civil exchange of ideas. As a person that has served on education boards for the past 22 years, including the Metro Community College Board, I believe a person serving on the Board of Regents needs to ensure that 1st amendment rights are not infringed upon and that the University has a campus climate that is civil and open to the exchange of differing opinions and ideas.

**Jack A. Stark:** The more serious and pressing issue in higher Education today is the restrictions on free speech and debate on American Campuses. Free speech zones, dis-invitations of speakers and campus shutdowns undermine our most important defining mission of the search for truth. I support the first Amendment fully as written and will support that standard on College campuses.

**HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF FUNDING FOR NEBRASKA'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES?**

**Mike Kennedy:** The University receives 59% of its budget from state appropriations which amounts to almost 1 billion dollars. That \$1 billion investment by the Nebraska taxpayers has a \$4.5 billion impact on Nebraska's economy. Nebraskan's know a good value when they see it. I believe the future for funding is bright if the Board of Regents continues to manage the budget wisely and

invests in projects like UNMC's "Next Project" which will have billions of dollars of impact on our local and state economy.

**Jack A. Stark:** Recent adjustments to admission requirements will help with enrollment. However the University will still be facing funding constraints as they have exhausted what they will receive from the state and other sources. As a member of the Board of Regents I will review programs and make the tough decisions on what programs need to evolve or be cut in an effort to control costs for students and increase the quality of their education.

### **WITH THE RISING COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, HOW WILL YOU HELP TO ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG NEBRASKANS HAVE ACCESS TO A COLLEGE EDUCATION?**

**Mike Kennedy:** I have successfully worked on college affordability for the past 22 years. While serving on the Metro Board we worked to keep tuition low and expanded aid. While serving on the Millard School Board, I helped create Nebraska's first Early College program where high school seniors graduate with their Associates Degree from Metro. The University needs to work on securing more public and private funding for scholarships and continue its efforts in helping students obtain high paying internships.

**Jack A. Stark:** UNMC'S NExT Project is a 3 billion public/private partnership that will be transformational for future students. We need to find similar public/private partnerships for all of our state colleges to better match students with their talents and areas of job growth in exchange for tuition for years of service particularly in STEM fields. This will help reduce tuition costs and excessive student loan burdens for the students upon graduation.

## **STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION - DISTRICT 2**

### **Robert Anthony (R):**

Education: *Bachelor's Degree from Grace University in Christian Ministry, 3 Associate's Degrees in Communications, Electronics, and Korean Studies, and a Project Management Professional Certification* Military Experience: *USAF Retired Senior Master Sergeant 2019, served 22 years, last position was the Superintendent of the largest flying squadron in the Air Force. I started my career as an Avionics mechanic and was then selected to become an Airborne Korean Linguist.* Volunteer Experience: *Sarpy County Elected Official Salary Committee, Church Security team, Omaha metro area sport's official for over 15 years, awarded Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for community volunteer work throughout my military career.*

### **Lisa Fricke (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *State Board of Education Member Incumbent-Elected in 2016* Past Public Office, dates held: *NE State Board of Education is my first public office* Education: *Graduate of Bellevue East, BAE from Wayne State College, Earned five additional teaching endorsements, Taught English 6-12, Geography 7-9, Speech 7-12, Language Arts 6-8, and Reading*

*8 Military Experience: My father served in the US Air Force for 30 years. Being a member of a military family gave me a global perspective that still guides many of my decisions today.* Volunteer Experience: *I have served as a volunteer for the Red Cross, Salvation Army, an Intergenerational & TeamMates Mentor, helped with NeSA Assessments for Reading and Writing, and was also a gubernatorial appointee to the Special Education Accountability Commission*

### **DO YOU SEE THIS BOARD AS BEING AN ELECTED OR APPOINTED BODY? PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING.**

**Robert Anthony:** This board is elected by the constituents of District 2 through a popular vote, while an appointed board is selected by another leader or a body of officials without the vote of the public. The Governor sometimes must fill vacancies that arise and cannot be filled until an election takes place. In that instance as we have seen on the State Board of Education, a seat on the board was appointed.

**Lisa Fricke:** I see the Board as an elected constitutional body. According to the NE Constitution Article VII, Section 3: "The State Board of Education shall be composed of eight members, who shall be elected from eight districts of substantially equal population as provided by the Legislature." One state senator unsuccessfully tried to eliminate the State Board, but the legislative bill didn't make it out of committee, demonstrating the senators support for the State Board.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?**

**Robert Anthony:** LB147 would have been a great step towards safer schools. I fully support SROs in our schools. They aide in the security of our students & staff. However, when a student gets violent in a classroom, SROs may not react quick enough or be on campus. The use of reasonable physical intervention to manage a student's behavior to protect staff, other students, & themselves, but not to cause physical harm must be allowed. In order for students to achieve their goals, we must provide a safe environment.

**Lisa Fricke:** School personnel, students, communities, and the state must work as a team to ensure school safety. School districts must have an up-to-date safety plan that utilizes best practices. Schools should have a process that allows students to report safety concerns. Several schools have weekly safety advisory meetings to assess potential safety issues--being proactive averts danger. Effective safety communication among all stakeholders is essential.

### **HOW CAN THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF TEACHERS BE SUPPORTED?**

**Robert Anthony:** With the pandemic, many teachers have had to adjust quickly with technology. Education in regards to technology

is essential right now. Rural schools would also benefit from this growth. School boards should foster this expanded training in tech along with standard CE within a teacher's field of expertise. This education should not come as a financial burden to our teachers, specifically because our students benefit so much from our teacher's growth. Grants for teachers should be made available.

**Lisa Fricke:** Continuing education is important, but professional development meets immediate needs: Teachers should have input in this process. PD training improves teacher effectiveness which in turn improves student learning. Right now, mental health is a concern, but any training should start with districts ascertaining teacher needs. Then, the district can seek input from ESUs and the NE Dept. of Ed. that could provide trainers and best practice resources to support what teachers need to be successful.

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION - DISTRICT 4

### **Jacquelyn Morrison (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *NA* Past Public Office, dates held: *NA* Education: *BBA (Accountancy)-The George Washington University, Juris Doctor - Georgetown University* Military Experience: *NA* Volunteer Experience: *Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) Volunteer, St. Cecilia's Cathedral Soccer Coach, Member of the Office of Violence Prevention Advisory Board, Former Mentor with Girls Inc Bold Futures Program*

### **Adrian Petrescu (NP):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *Doctor of Philosophy, Public Policy (hon), Economics of Science & Technology for Innovation, Univ of Pittsburgh, 2003 Juris Doctor, Creighton Univ, Omaha NE, 2016 Master of Science, Engineering, UPBucharest, Romania, 1989 M.A., Int'l Rel's, NSPSA, Ro* Military Experience: *Yes.* Volunteer Experience: *Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA), Omaha NE 2015- Yates Future, #SaveYatesForOmaha, ensuring continuance of Refugee & Immigrants educational programming by OPS, & building repurpose, Nov 2019- Gifford Park Neighborhood OPS & GPNA, EdSpec Comm-2017*

## DO YOU SEE THIS BOARD AS BEING AN ELECTED OR APPOINTED BODY? PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING.

**Jacquelyn Morrison:** The State Board of Education is an elected body per the Nebraska State Constitution. I believe that the board should remain an elected body as it allows each district to vote for the candidate that best represents their district.

**Adrian Petrescu:** Nebraska State Board of Education is elected. It is very important for Nebraska Dept. of Education to respond to the citizens through representation by an elected board. Democracy is ensured, & the vision of the Nebraska Department of Education, "to lead and support the preparation of all Nebraskans for learning, earning, and living," can be fulfilled truthfully with equity towards

\_all\_ Nebraskans. Democracy often under-hears those who whisper--e.g. girls in STEM. This board must hear everyone.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

**Jacquelyn Morrison:** I believe that safety is an extremely important issue. Within schools we can improve safety by addressing our growing need for behavioral and mental health services. If we are able to address these needs of students, teachers and students will be less exposed to danger. We also have to guard against outside threats to our schools. I think we do this by securing our schools and creating strategic partnerships with local officials and law enforcement.

**Adrian Petrescu:** Parents must take responsibility to nurture discipline & respect from early on in life of children, & ongoing. Role models. This way school children will behave better as they had & continue to have a good upbringing in partnership children-schools-families-communities. Early childhood structured learning opportunities help w/ early socializing among children before they come to school. Attention to diversity & inclusion as in Gifford Park. Training for teachers. Strong gun background checks.

## HOW CAN THE CONTINUING EDUCATION OF TEACHERS BE SUPPORTED?

**Jacquelyn Morrison:** The continuing education of teachers can be supported through funds specifically dedicated to professional development. As a regular practice, we should continuously survey the needs of teachers, and work with educators to develop course offerings that address those areas of need. Finally, I believe that we have to reward teachers (through raises and promotions) for their efforts so that they know that their efforts are recognized.

**Adrian Petrescu:** Training & professional development for teachers made available. Lecture/speakers series. Sharing of best practices. NED support for furthering educational opportunities--we did it with establishing partnerships between school district(s) and educational institutions (community colleges and universities and graduate programs), in SE Michigan, in S Texas, in Philadelphia. Peer system of support internally inside ESUs/Schools/Grade/Subject. Support from NSEA and OEA for continuing education. CECs?

## EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNITS

**Please see [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) for information on the following Educational Service Units:**

Educational Service Unit #2 - District 6

Educational Service Unit #3 - District 2, District 4 & District 6

## DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER - DISTRICT 1

**Mike Boyle (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *County Commissioner* Past Public Office, dates held: *Mayor of Omaha*  
Education: *St. Cecilia's Cathedral High School U.N.O.1963 -1964*  
*Creighton University 1962 - 1973 Creighton University Law School 1974 - 1977* Military Experience: *Sole Surviving Son, Gold Star Brother* Volunteer Experience: *American Red Cross, Combined Health Agency Drive, Urban League 1963,Holy Name Housing Board 1980 - 2006, Citizens for Educational Freedom, Co-Founder, Omaha 100*

### WHAT ELEMENT OF THE COUNTY'S GOVERNMENT IS MOST EFFECTIVE, AND WHY?

**Mike Boyle:** There are many effective operations of County Government. The Douglas County Health Department under the leadership of Adi Pour,Ph.d stands out.. She and her staff are performing, so well. They are disseminating solid, accurate information and coordinating their work with all branches of our Government. Elected Officials, and Department leaders are serving us well, Our dedicated employees make us proud, We serve the Citizens of Douglas County. We are proud to serve.

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF? ARE THERE ANY SERVICES YOU THINK SHOULD BE CUT, AND IF SO, WHY?

**Mike Boyle:** No smoke and mirrors to this answer. WE NEED GAMBLING! Let's start with Sports Gaming. I heard Iowa pulled in \$76,000,000,000,00 the first month of Sports Betting. Gambling is legal in almost every State near Nebraska. I serve as co-chair of the Budget Committee with Commissioner P.J. Morgan, Douglas County Finance Director, Joe Lorenz, helps us look for spending cuts wherever possible. But, County Government is an arm of the State. We need to add GAMBLING REVENUE so we can cut property taxes

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE THREE MOST COMPELLING PROBLEMS FACING YOUR OFFICE?

**Mike Boyle:** Prison crowding, Mental Health treatment and saving our young people from lives of crime are several important problems facing us. (High property taxes are a BIG PROBLEM, too). We need to enact fair bail relief so persons charged with misdemeanors can get back to work and back to their families. Mental Health care needs to be available to so many suffering neighbors and friends. The terrible crimes our young people are committing is alarming! We must let young people know they matter.

### WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES?

**Mike Boyle:** Our Director of Environmental Services is a leader in his Field. Douglas County has adopted a Model, Low Impact Development Plan that conserves water and is cost effective. It

calls for an end for dams that DO NOT stop flooding. DAMS FAIL. OPPD is offering options such as solar and wind generation. These renewable sources are needed. Thank you, OPPD Directors! I represented Douglas County in a Resilient Counties program sponsored by the National Association of Counties. Important lessons.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER - DISTRICT 3

**Chris Rodgers (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Douglas County Commissioner (2005 - Present)* Past Public Office, dates held: *Member of Metropolitan Community College Board of Governors (1999 - 2004)* Education: *Creighton University BA 92; MBA 99 and University of Nebraska at Omaha MPA 2002* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Salem Baptist Church, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc.*

### WHAT ELEMENT OF THE COUNTY'S GOVERNMENT IS MOST EFFECTIVE, AND WHY?

**Chris Rodgers:** The Health Department is one of our most effective elements. I think we see it now through our response to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF? ARE THERE ANY SERVICES YOU THINK SHOULD BE CUT, AND IF SO, WHY?

**Chris Rodgers:** County Government runs very lean. Ending unfunded mandates from the state can help reduce property taxes.

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE THREE MOST COMPELLING PROBLEMS FACING YOUR OFFICE?

**Chris Rodgers:** Mentally Ill in adult corrections, reforming juvenile justice and preparing public health for its future in Douglas County.

### WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES?

**Chris Rodgers:** We should take opportunities to use renewable energy. I think this is the most immediate manner we can address climate change.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER - DISTRICT 5

**Maureen Boyle (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *none* Past Public Office, dates held: *none* Education: *Marian High School; University of Nebraska at Omaha, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, major in finance; University of Nebraska Medical Center, Medical Doctor* Military Experience: *none*

**Tim Lonergan (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *none* Past Public Office, dates held: *Metro Community College 9/06-12/10* Education: *Omaha Central HS 1980 University of Omaha, NE BA*

History 1990 University of Omaha, NE BA, Education, 1995  
University of Omaha,, NE BA Spec Ed 2000 Military Experience:  
US Coast Guard active duty Aug 1980-Jan 1985 USNR April  
1985-June 1990 US Coast Guard Reserve June 1990 Sept 2000  
Retired 21 years service. Volunteer Experience: Knights of  
Columbus St. Pius X, St. Leo School St. Leo Church St. Elizabeth  
Ann Church Boys Scouts Ancient Order of Hibernians Am. Red  
Cross EPS

#### WHAT ELEMENT OF THE COUNTY'S GOVERNMENT IS MOST EFFECTIVE, AND WHY?

**Maureen Boyle:** The 911 Center has a critical task. Not only does the call center work within the county to send help, but it also coordinates with other counties and cities when they may be closer. More recently, the Election Office showed us that county government can truly serve when needed. During the May primary, mail-in voting skyrocketed. The Election Commissioner was allocated money by the County Board, and in my opinion, his leadership helped the election in Douglas County run without a hitch.

**Tim Lonergan:** The County's most effective element is collecting the taxes owed to them. The County employees are hard working and the County gets a good value for their hard work.

#### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF? ARE THERE ANY SERVICES YOU THINK SHOULD BE CUT, AND IF SO, WHY?

**Maureen Boyle:** Most importantly, look at spending. Minimize turnover for valuable front-line employees like CNAs, nurses, and corrections officers. It's more economical to keep these workers satisfied than to replace them. Seek out related or duplicate city and county services and determine if economies of scale could be applied. Due to COVID, the county has expanded availability of services online. Some employees may be able to work remotely.

**Tim Lonergan:** Look at Technology to reduce the tax burden on the county tax payer. Look at all budgets to find ways to reduce the tax levee. Also the reduction in the County Commissioner Salary that was voted on to increase 100%

#### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE THREE MOST COMPELLING PROBLEMS FACING YOUR OFFICE?

**Maureen Boyle:** 1. COVID. This has caused a hit on several fronts. We now understand how a public health issue can impact every aspect of our lives - physical and mental health, jobs, housing, nutrition, education, and even relationships. 2. Criminal justice. The new juvenile justice center should be delayed until all needs are understood, and data is consistent, analyzed, and validated. For adults, cash bail should be eliminated and bail decisions made by judges. 3. Property taxes. A perennial issue.

**Tim Lonergan:** Transparency with the County Board, The 120 Million Dollar Bond issue, Public Safety

#### WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES?

**Maureen Boyle:** Everything possible. We should transition to electric vehicles for the county fleet. Convening with OPPD board members to brainstorm joint projects should be considered. When bidding on projects, preference should be given to contractors proficient in renewable energy. Renovations and repairs of current buildings should be undertaken with energy efficiency in mind. This is a big deal.

**Tim Lonergan:** The county could do more with Re-duce, re-use and Re-cycle.

#### DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER - DISTRICT 7

**Mike Friend (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *none* Past Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska Legislature, District 10 2003 through 2009* Education: *Creighton University, BA, Mass Communications*

**Jo Giles (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None* Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *B.A., Washington University in St. Louis, Psychology & African American Studies, 1995; M.A., University of Missouri-Columbia, Journalism, 1998; Certificate of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center, 2016* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Board Member, Omaha Public Library Foundation, 2016-present; Board Member, Fontenelle Forest, 2019-present; Board Member, InCOMMON Community Development, 2013-2017; Conceive Nebraska, founding board member, 2012-2015; Church hosting team volunteer*

#### WHAT ELEMENT OF THE COUNTY'S GOVERNMENT IS MOST EFFECTIVE, AND WHY?

**Mike Friend:** The administrative function in all areas. County administration is a ministerial responsibility, which requires great attention to detail and sound fiduciary responsibility. Efficient appropriation of funding with the taxpayer in mind is paramount.

**Jo Giles:** As a candidate with public health training, I think the Douglas County Health Department is demonstrating exceptional and thoughtful leadership during our COVID-19 pandemic. Public health is about prevention and the health department, in partnership with the Emergency Management Department, quickly created a dashboard to report cases and provide data-driven, academic best practices to test, track and slow community spread.

#### WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF? ARE THERE ANY SERVICES YOU THINK SHOULD BE CUT, AND IF SO, WHY?

**Mike Friend:** Internal auditing of processes and programs are important. Possible redundancy in law enforcement services could be addressed, as well as redundancy in other services between the

city and county governments. Interlocal agreements are also a good way to potentially relieve certain redundancies.

**Jo Giles:** While structural solutions to property tax relief are the responsibility of state government, I believe the county board should examine ways to implement an annual percentage cap on property tax valuations. This would prevent the large increases property owners face each year. Of course, we must balance property tax relief and efficient use of taxpayer dollars for county services.

#### **WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE THREE MOST COMPELLING PROBLEMS FACING YOUR OFFICE?**

**Mike Friend:** Fiduciary/financial responsibility The need for property tax relief Understanding and implementing appropriate taxing authority (utilizing a vote of the people is one example)

**Jo Giles:** 1) The budget, due to economic challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We must look for cost-cutting solutions while meeting community needs. 2) Mental health was a huge need pre-pandemic and is exacerbated now. It also must be addressed in our prison system where mental health challenges often contribute to overcrowding in the facility. 3) Juvenile justice reform should focus on prevention and trauma-informed programming to change the trajectory of the lives of youth.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE COUNTY DO TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES?**

**Mike Friend:** Always implement best practices to seriously deal with our responsibility to be a good steward of the environment.

**Jo Giles:** The County should implement best practices for environmental sustainability in all building renovations and new facilities. It also should look for opportunities to use renewable energy and reducing the carbon footprint of buildings and vehicles. As a member of the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA), the County should push for a regional and efficient transit system.

### **DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**Tom Riley (D):** Mr. Riley is running unopposed for this office.

### **METROPOLITAN UTILITIES DISTRICT OF OMAHA - SUBDIVISION 3**

**Gwen Howard (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *MUD Board of Directors, Current Board Chairperson* Past Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska State Senator, 2005-2013* Education: *Omaha Benson High School; Midland University, BA; University of Nebraska, MSW, Social Work.* Volunteer Experience: *Friends of the Library; Member, Dundee Neighborhood Association*

#### **WHAT FACTORS WOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING RATES AND RATE CHANGES?**

**Gwen Howard:** We continually address our critical infrastructure integrity, while minimizing the financial impact on ratepayers.

#### **WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY FOR MUD?**

**Gwen Howard:** We have an efficient dedicated workforce intent on delivering clean water and reliable gas services. The more we get ahead of the aging infrastructure, we can reduce breaks that call for emergency repairs and overtime at all hours. MUD does an excellent job maintaining facilities. Fortunately, our pumping stations are mostly elevated and built at a distance that has helped us avoid more severe flood damage.

#### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Gwen Howard:** Continuing to provide open meetings with transparency and an opportunity for public participation. Also, continue to facilitate open communication between the Board, MUD management and our utility employees. Pushing forward on the necessary infrastructure priorities. In times of stress, such as the Coronavirus pandemic, ensuring essential utility services are not shut off.

#### **WHAT EFFORT WOULD YOU MAKE TO MEET THE GOAL OF INCREASING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Gwen Howard:** MUD is switching more of our fleet vehicles to a CNG (compressed natural gas) fuel source, and we are partnering with Metro Area Transit to bring more buses online to this alternative fuel. MUD continues to be forward thinking when it comes to preservation of the environment and use of renewable energy.

### **METROPOLITAN UTILITIES DISTRICT OF OMAHA - SUBDIVISION 4**

**Tim Cavanaugh (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *MUD Board of Directors, 1999-now. Three-time Chairman.* Past Public Office, dates held: *above* Education: *Ryan High School UNO, C.J./Business Administration Creighton Law School, 1979-80 University of Nebraska Graduate School, MS, C.J./Public Admin Graduate, FBI National Academy* Military Experience: *Regretfully, none.* Volunteer Experience: *Rotary Club of Omaha, 17 years, past president and Rotary Foundation Board. Paul Harris Fellow, 3 times.*

**Tom Wurtz (NP):** Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *BA UNL 1971. Juris Doctorate UNL 1974.* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Knights of Columbus St. Wenceslaus Church. Challenger Alumni Softball (coach)*

*President's Advisory Council UNL. Catholic Charities Board of Directors. Urban League Board of Directors. Governor's Water Policy Council. State Energy Policy Council.*

#### **WHAT FACTORS WOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING RATES AND RATE CHANGES?**

**Tim Cavanaugh:** Number 1 is the ability for our ratepayer-owners to afford our services. Safety is a major concern, as well as the delivery of clean water and safe gas transmission.

**Tom Wurtz:** The first duty of a board member is to ensure the district has sufficient revenues to deliver water and natural gas safely to our customers with reasonable rates. I would consider all customer classifications (residential, commercial and manufacturing) to determine if all are treated fairly. We need to retain competent managers and employees, who have an understanding of the complexities involved in the delivery of gas and water to the public. I would also consider the level of customer service.

#### **WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY FOR MUD?**

**Tim Cavanaugh:** I challenged the staff to work toward a two-hour appointment window for service when we implemented GPS on service trucks which allowed for more efficient deployment of service trucks. Also, I pressed for the implementation of online payments. I am very proud of our high bond rating and the high level of funding of the employee's pension fund.

**Tom Wurtz:** The most important opportunity for efficiency is to ensure that the district remains a public utility with local control and ownership by our customers. Privatization would result in an immediate 25% increase in rates. More of our construction and field service personnel should report directly to job sites rather than district facilities in order to increase efficiency. Also the district should conduct a study to search for duplication of functions and continue discounted natural gas purchases.

#### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Tim Cavanaugh:** Ramp up the progress toward water infrastructure replacement within an affordable rate structure.

**Tom Wurtz:** I will make all committee meetings open to the public. I will solve the water pressure problems in west Omaha, particularly in sub district 4. We need to provide better customer service for our customer owners. We need a comprehensive study of our rate structure to make sure we have an appropriate balance between monthly service charges and commodity costs. We need to conduct a comprehensive study of safety and security programs with emphasis on cyber security.

#### **WHAT EFFORT WOULD YOU MAKE TO MEET THE GOAL OF INCREASING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Tim Cavanaugh:** MUD delivers natural gas and water. The exploration of methane gas sources (garbage dumpsites) may be worthwhile.

**Tom Wurtz:** Although natural gas is not technically a renewable fuel source, it is 98% clean burning and better for the environment than other fuels. I will continue to encourage the utilization of natural gas and CNG in cars and trucks. This will reduce our carbon footprint. As past president of MUD, I instituted a program to convert the electrical power source for our regulator stations to solar energy. I would explore the possibilities of converting as much of the electrical usage to solar power.

#### **METROPOLITAN UTILITIES DISTRICT OF OMAHA - SUBDIVISION 5**

##### **Tanya Cook (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *Metropolitan Utilities District Board of Directors, Subdistrict #5* Past Public Office, dates held: *Nebraska State Senator, Legislative District #13 2009-2017*  
Education: *University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Master of Arts Georgetown University, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Omaha Central High School, College Prep*  
Volunteer Experience: *Current Board Leadership: Film Streams, Director Coalition for a Strong Nebraska, Leadership Team US Global Leadership Coalition, Nebraska Advisory Committee*  
Previous Boards: *United Way of the Midlands Girls, Inc.*

#### **WHAT FACTORS WOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING RATES AND RATE CHANGES?**

**Tanya Cook:** When determining rates and rate changes, I consider whether or not the increase to customer cost is truly necessary to the responsible management of MUD. I voted "no" to an increase to customer bills at the December 2019 Board meeting.

#### **WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY FOR MUD?**

**Tanya Cook:** in my short time as the MUD Director representing Subdistrict #5, I have found that the organization operates with a high level of efficiency and integrity. As I continue to serve, I plan to seek out opportunities for even better communication among divisions along with increased options for customer-owners.

#### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Tanya Cook:** If elected, my priorities would be to identify ways to improve service to customer-owners.

**WHAT EFFORT WOULD YOU MAKE TO MEET THE GOAL OF INCREASING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY? (ONLINE ONLY)**

**Tanya Cook:** I support MUD's current comprehensive sustainability plan and look forward to viable renewable energy options as they emerge.

**OMAHA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT - SUBDIVISION 1**

**Amanda Bogner (D):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *OPPD Board of Directors, 2019 - 2020* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *B.S. Architectural Engineering, University of Kansas (2002)* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *UNL Architectural Engineering Industry Mentor Corp; The Big Garden; Lindenwood Homeowners Association; USGBC Flatwater Chapter; USGBC Energy and Atmosphere Technical Advisory Group; St. Vincent de Paul; Leadership Omaha Class #39*

**Mark E. Treinen (R):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *none* Past Public Office, dates held: *OPPD director from November, 2017 through December, 2018* Education: *BSBA in accounting from Creighton University CPA* Military Experience: *none* Volunteer Experience: *served on boards of Catholic Charities (12 years), Marian High School (6 years), Youth Emergency Services (20 years), Sheltering Tree (1 year)*

**IS INCREASING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY A PRIORITY FOR YOU? IF SO, WHAT IS YOUR PLAN FOR THIS INCREASE? IF NOT, WHY NOT?**

**Amanda Bogner:** Yes. As a current board member, I have been an advocate for increasing the use of renewable energy. I supported the Power with Purpose proposal which included 600 megawatts of solar. I also supported the revision of Strategic Directive 7 which set a goal for OPPD to achieve zero-carbon in all its operations by 2050. If I am re-elected, I will continue to support this transition and ensure that OPPD continues to provide affordable, reliable electricity.

**Mark E. Treinen:** Until significant advances are made in renewable technologies to reduce the impact of their intermittency issue, and significant developments are made in battery and other storage technologies (both from a cost and capacity standpoint) some use of fossil fuels will be necessary. OPPD is a very responsible utility from an environmental standpoint and takes it very seriously. They are constantly monitoring new and developing technologies for future generation needs and grid management.

**HOW WOULD YOU WORK TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY AT OPPD?**

**Amanda Bogner:** I support the work done by the LWV to get OPPD Board meetings live-streamed and believe that we need to

continue to strive for greater public engagement in everything we do. OPPD will need public engagement as it seeks to adjust rate structures, implement the zero-carbon goal, and encourage more electrified transportation. The Board needs to ensure that the public is heard. This means that we need to hold public stakeholder meetings and gather input from customers before creating policy.

**Mark E. Treinen:** I believe in transparency vis-à-vis the public so long as it does not cause the release of sensitive proprietary and/or competitive data, or information subject to non-disclosure agreements. OPPD conducts business in a competitive national marketplace, and certain information has the potential to harm their position.

**IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Amanda Bogner:** I will continue to prioritize safe, affordable, reliable electricity. I am currently working on a plan that would reduce bills for 85% of customers. As a mechanical engineer and small business owner, I have spent my career helping companies make smart energy decisions that lower costs and improve business efficiency. As an OPPD Board Member, I will continue to advocate for increasing energy efficiency throughout the district to help people and businesses lower their electricity bills.

**Mark E. Treinen:** Top 3 priorities are: 1. Safety of the employees and the public. 2. Reliable power delivery 3. Electric rates below the Midwest average by at least 20% I will define success as a SAIDI measurement of 90 and no general rate increases until that 20% cheaper rate is achieved.

**OMAHA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT - SUBDIVISION 2**

**Krystle Craig (D):** No response received

**Sara Howard (D):** No response received

**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD - SUBDISTRICT 1**

**Ted Japp (R):** No response received

**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD - SUBDISTRICT 3**

**Larry Bradley (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Papio-Missouri River NRD, District #3. 2017-Current* Past Public Office, dates held: *Papio-Missouri River NRD, District #3. 2009-2012.* Education: *Technical High School. '81' B.S. Biology, UNO, '97' M.A. Biology, UNO, '01' Ph.D. Geography, UNL, '10' Military* Experience: *U.S. Army. 1982-1986. Honorable Discharge.* Volunteer Experience: *Ancient Order of Hibernians-Father*

*Flanagan Division. President Emeritus. 10 years. G. I. Forum-Omaha Chapter. Local Veterans Post. Former Commander. 12 years. Knights of Columbus- Council #3019. 3 years.*

**Christian Mirch (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None. I am a political outsider.* Past Public Office, dates held: *None. I am a political outsider.* Education: *Creighton University, BS Creighton University School of Law, JD* Military Experience: *N/A* Volunteer Experience: *Volunteered at Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church Food Pantry Previous P.A.C.E. Coach while working as an Omaha Police Officer*

#### **WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO PREPARE FOR CHANGES IN CLIMATE TRENDS THAT AFFECT NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT?**

**Larry Bradley:** I will continue on with what I have been doing for the past eight years that I have served on the local NRD Board. During the Great Flood of 2019, much of the inner-city of the Omaha Metropolitan area did not have the flooding issues as seen in Bellevue, Elkhorn, and Valley. Why? Because I have a voting record for flood protection measures. I have also voted for digital mapping of groundwater sources, studies for future increased rainfall events, and drought monitoring projects.

**Christian Mirch:** I believe that we need to focus on repairing our crumbling infrastructure and preparing our fire, police, and emergency medical personnel to respond to flooding events. Therefore, my first priority will be to focus on building a coalition of local, state, and federal partners to begin rebuilding and repairing our dilapidated infrastructure. Additionally, I will work to ensure that our first responders are provided swift-water rescue training and equipment, which most agencies currently lack.

#### **HOW DO YOU ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF CITIZENS AND DEVELOPERS WHO WANT ACCESS TO NRD PROJECTS?**

**Larry Bradley:** Many times I have said that Omaha is the next Kansas City. As I have a Ph.D. in Geography from UNL, I have the educational background to understand how the NRD must stay ahead of the rapid pace of development. Every week we lose another cornfield to housing expansion. It is vitally important the NRD strike a balance between, conservation, development, and recreation. I have voted for recreational projects both rural and urban.

**Christian Mirch:** As a member of the NRD Board I will be a voice for every citizen. I will work to ensure that I am able to speak with every citizen living in the Papio-Missouri NRD, and every developer who has ideas of how to best develop areas within the NRD. I will give consideration to all ideas, especially those that promote responsible development, focused on respect for the environment, private property rights, and lower taxes.

#### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Larry Bradley:** Job creation! Right now the United States is in another recession. The state of Nebraska is not immune to the economic downturn. When I served my first term on the NRD Board starting in 2008, we were in the midst of a recession then as well. I voted for shovel ready projects that in turn created jobs and expanded our tax base. Jobs can be created with measures for flood protection, as well as recreational projects. Experience is the best reason to re-elect Larry Bradley to the NRD.

**Christian Mirch:** I will first build a coalition of local, state, and federal partners to begin rebuilding and repairing our dilapidated and crumbling infrastructure. By joining forces, we can ensure that Nebraska taxpayers are not the only ones left with the bill. Next, I will ensure that our first responders have the training and equipment necessary to conduct swift-water rescues, should areas of our NRD begin to flood again. I will also focus on cutting wasteful spending in order to reduce our property taxes.

#### **PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD - SUBDISTRICT 5**

**Rich Tesar (R):** No response received

#### **PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD - SUBDISTRICT 7**

**Danny Begley (D):** No response received

#### **PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NRD - SUBDISTRICT 9**

**Tyler Berzina (D):**

Education: *Millard South High School (1993); University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bachelors (1998) and Masters (2004) in Secondary Science Education; UNL Assessment Endorsement (2006); UNL Graduate Science Courses (2008+)* Volunteer Experience: *American Legion Post 216; Assistance League of Omaha*

**Patrick Bonnett (R):**

Current Public Office, dates held: *I do not currently serve in public office. However, I am the current Vice-President for the Walnut Grove Condominium Association Regime I formerly an S.I.D.* Past Public Office, dates held: *I have previously served on the Papio-Missouri Natural Resource District Board in Millard from 2012 - 2016. My main priority was getting Dam Site 15A done which is now Fr. Flannigan Lake.* Education: *I attended the Univ. of Nebraska and graduated with a BGSGA - Real Estate Finance & Land Use Economics. My Minors were in Sociology and Military Science. I hold multiple professional licenses and have several post-graduate professional designations.* Military Experience: *I served as a Multiple Rocket and Deep Attack Missile Systems Specialist in the US Army Field Artillery from 1993 to 1996. Then as a Unit Legal NCO in the US Army Reserve from 1996 to 2003.* Volunteer Experience: *I volunteer from time to time for the Red Cross, for my Catholic church St. John Vianney, and for youth sports programs. I have also served on the Millard Business Assoc Board, Future Omaha's Board and co-founded the Millard Alumni Association.*

### WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO PREPARE FOR CHANGES IN CLIMATE TRENDS THAT AFFECT NATURAL RESOURCE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT?

**Tyler Berzina:** We must prepare for a new normal with an ever-changing climate. Prevention is much cheaper and prudent than cleanup and rebuilding, and we still have far to go from our current vulnerable position. As a NRD board member, I will support the building of flood mitigation measures which will create robust protections against climate change as long as each best course of action is supported by evidence and is fiscally responsible within our limited taxpayer resources.

**Patrick Bonnett:** To prepare for potential changes in climate and specifically Drought, I would investigate opportunities for Water Banking in Nebraska where needed and where it might make sense. Certain climate trends also appear to have impact on our Nebraska managed pollinator colonies and I would advocate for the restoration of the Honey Bee population which has seen a 50% decline in recent years. I also support the President's advocacy to plant 1 Trillion trees and intend to expand the NRD's tree program.

### HOW DO YOU ADDRESS THE CONCERNS OF CITIZENS AND DEVELOPERS WHO WANT ACCESS TO NRD PROJECTS?

**Tyler Berzina:** As a forward-thinking physics teacher, I encourage, listen to, and support my students to be creative, objective, and innovative while making decisions based on evidence. I want to bring this same spirit to the NRD table when listening to the concerns of citizens and developers as they pertain to NRD projects. I look forward to hearing the pros and cons for specific projects, how developers can enhance project development, and am open to innovative efficiencies which can save taxpayer dollars.

**Patrick Bonnett:** I support the practice of allowing all NRD projects to be generally open to the public unless there is a potential health hazard as may be the case with certain marsh or water quality basins. Developers or other Municipalities sometimes target the acquisition of adjacent land and in those cases there may be certain opportunities for the taxpayer to realize a much greater return on their tax dollar. I would seek out those opportunities. I also intend to audit all Inter-Local Agreements.

### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Tyler Berzina:** Our community is in need of rebuilding damaged levees, enhancing and expanding flood control measures that were strategized many decades ago and have yet to be developed. Furthermore, urbanization, costs increased by waiting, current flood risks, and our need for recreation all necessitate completion of these projects sooner than later. I look forward to supporting flood mitigation and other needed projects that support the goals of the NRD, as these are well spent investments in our community.

**Patrick Bonnett:** Once elected, I will focus my efforts on the following 7 priorities: Flood Control; Air & Water Quality; Reduction of Soil Erosion and Stream-bed Sedimentation; Storm Water Runoff Control; Provide for High Quality Rural Water Supply; Improve Forest, Fish & Wildlife Habitat; Provide Outdoor Recreation Facilities and Participation in Solid Waste Management and Recycling Efforts to help extend the Lifespan of our County Landfills which are an expensive burden to taxpayers.

### PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION - DISTRICT 2

**Tim Davis (R):** Education: Two diplomas in Construction and Entrepreneurship. These were received from Southeast Community College and Western Iowa Tech. Volunteer experience: Volunteered on the Don Bacon Campaign in 2018 One of the Douglas County Republican Volunteer of the Year in 2019.

**Crystal Rhoades (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: Commissioner Nebraska Public Service Commission 2015 - present. Past Public Office, dates held: Metropolitan Community College Board 2006-2014. Education: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, University of Nebraska, Omaha. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: Chairwoman Douglas County Democratic Party 2016 - 2020, National Association of Regulatory Commissioners, Vice Chair of Telecommunications Committee and the Rural Broadband Expansion Task Force.

### WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Tim Davis:** When I get elected, I will work to get the most up to date broadband service to the voters ahead of schedule. I will make sure the life-saving 911 system is in place allowing for fast response times. I will work to make sure we have the best rates available for all ride sharing options on the market.

**Crystal Rhoades:** This position requires a detailed knowledge of telecommunications infrastructure, consumer protection law, transportation law, and the ability to understand complex technical topics. I have a proven track record of working with state and federal law and policy makers to produce results for constituents. During my tenure I've worked with the legislature to pass laws that legalized ride sharing, legislation to reduce robocalls, and improved accountability for companies receiving public grants.

### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Tim Davis:** I plan to sit down and discuss with the various cellular providers in the market to discuss what issues they are having when it comes to implementing the updated broadband services. I will also look into the Next Gen 911 system to make sure we are getting the best services possible.

**Crystal Rhoades:** I'll continue to improve oversight of government funds such as 911 and universal service to ensure customers are getting high quality services at the lowest cost.

When I started at the Commission the audits for 911 were running 3-5 years behind. I advocated to get those completed so taxpayers would have confidence their money was being spent appropriately. I've also been an advocate at the state and local level to expand access to high speed internet for low income customers.

### WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY/COUNTY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?

**Tim Davis:** District 2 has a number of issues they deal with. First of which is the 911 response time. There have been a number of instances where services took longer than it should have. When I get elected I will review what is needed to make sure Next Gen 911 is up and running to minimize future response time. I will work closely with the telcom providers in the state to make sure that the voters are getting the most up to date broadband services at the best possible prices.

**Crystal Rhoades:** 1. Funding and improving 911 call center reliability is critical in Douglas County. Currently our community has the highest call volume and contributes more to the 911 fund than any other county but we receive a fraction of the funding back to support our call center, I will work to increase funding. 2. There are frequent telephone outages in Douglas County, I will work to reduce those outages. 3. Increase funding to low income families so they can access broadband and telephone service.

### METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE-DISTRICT 1

**Brock Bean (R):** No response received

**Linda L. McDermitt (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Board of Governors at Metro Community College represents Dist.1 2016 to 2020* Past Public Office, dates held: *Board Governors @MCC 2010 to 2021* Education: *Associates Degree* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Youth groups Democrat Party in Nebraska*

### HOW SHOULD COMMUNITY COLLEGES DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES?

**Linda L. McDermitt:** Community Colleges have ability to be flexible In students ability with smaller classes and more one to one to fit Students needs. We also have ability to teach skill trades . MCC has community partnerships to create classes To train and teach welding, construction, 3D imagery, auto repair, Manufacturing training to name a few.

### WHAT SHOULD BE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INSTRUCTORS AT METRO?

**Linda L. McDermitt:** Master degree 10-18 years of field experience for social Services training. Auto repair requires teachers with work experience. In the field We have several instructors with job experience.

### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Linda L. McDermitt:** Develop master plan for Sarpy County campus Development.

### METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE-DISTRICT 2

**Brad Ashby (R):** Past Public Office, dates held: *Metro Community College Board of Governors* Education: *BS Computer Science* Military Experience: *USAF Retired*

**Alex Garrison (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *Bachelor's of Science in Journalism, University of Kansas; Associate's in Computer Programming, Metropolitan Community College* Military Experience: *N/A* Volunteer Experience: *Director At-Large and Website Admin, League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha (16-20); Curriculum Director, New Leaders Council Omaha (18-20); Field Canvasser, Kara Eastman for Congress (18); Lead Organizer, WordCamp Omaha 2015 (15-16)*

### HOW SHOULD COMMUNITY COLLEGES DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES?

**Brad Ashby:** I see MCC serving two separate purposes. First as always MCC should continue to offer courses in the trades to help people to into the workforce as quickly as possible. Second MCC is a great low cost option for student that plan to attend a 4 year University to obtain prerequisite classes that will transfer to the University.

**Alex Garrison:** We need to ensure that our community college continues to serve our communities by providing a wide range of different kinds of classes, courses, degree programs and avenues to success. Community colleges can also shift programming to innovate and adapt to changing community needs and can help build job skills faster and in a more focused way. Metro can support many different types of learners and, while that provides some challenges, it's also the institution's greatest strength.

### WHAT SHOULD BE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INSTRUCTORS AT METRO?

**Brad Ashby:** MCC instructors should have a Masters degree in the discipline in which they are instructing or any equivalent amount of experience in the trades in which they are teaching.

**Alex Garrison:** We have an obligation to maintain accreditation and the highest standards of instruction quality. I'm proud of the quality and qualifications of Metro's faculty and staff, and will work to continue to support them. While maintaining accreditation standards, I believe we should also have instructors with hands-on experience, particularly in areas such as the trades and I.T. This further improves student job readiness by helping to connect with industry and the latest innovations in the field.

## IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Brad Ashby:** 1. To keep MCC as a low cost option and look for ways to trim costs to reduce the burden on the tax payers. 2. Make sure that everyone who wants to attend MCC has that opportunity. 3. The current MCC President is planning to retire, I want to make sure MCC hires someone with similar traits that will be able to work with the Unicameral as well as be able to help fund raise for the College. 4. Promote the High School dual enrollment program.

**Alex Garrison:** Maintain tuition affordability. Form an accessibility committee to research educational programs to support students in “outside of the classroom” challenges such as mental and physical healthcare, childcare, transit, food scarcity, housing and criminal justice system and re-entry issues. Continue to evaluate COVID response. Determine a pathway to reducing the college’s carbon footprint to net zero by 2050.

## METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE-DISTRICT 3

**Adam Gotschall (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *AA-criminal justice* Military Experience: *6 years Iowa army national guard. Deployed from October 2005-July 2007 in support of operation Iraqi freedom. Flood duty in June of 2008. 2009 Presidential inauguration security detail.* Volunteer Experience: *Nebraska Veteran's Coalition, various tasks. American Legion Veteran's of Foreign Wars Hurricane Harvey relief, drove to Huffman, then Beaumont to deliver supplies. Iowa/Nebraska flood cleanup, including a 100 animal rescue. Other various jobs.*

**Dave Pantos (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Vice Chairperson, Metropolitan Community College, January 2020-present; Board Member, Metropolitan Community College, 2017-Present* Past Public Office, dates held: *Metropolitan Community College, Secretary, January 2019-January 2020. Board of Governors Rutgers University (1990-91).* Education: *JD - Indiana University Maurer School of Law (Bloomington, IN) MSES - O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs (Bloomington, IN) BA - Rutgers College* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Omaha Northwest Rotary Nonprofit Association of the Midlands Nebraska Supreme Court Commission on Children Legal Services Corporation Pro Bono Commission*

## HOW SHOULD COMMUNITY COLLEGES DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES?

**Adam Gotschall:** Community colleges are traditionally trade schools, with other options for education. Mostly, the community colleges need to focus on trades, which is something that universities don't generally do. Additionally, community colleges need to focus on being affordable, and stop trying to compete with universities. Most people seek out community colleges because they either don't want to spend the money on a university, or don't have the money to spend. College is already expensive.

**Dave Pantos:** Especially in the time of this pandemic, Community Colleges need to provide high quality education to a diverse set of learners. The traditional community college student is by definition "non-traditional." Therefore, community colleges need to ensure that there are no barriers to entry. Community College should aim to be low or no tuition. Community colleges should continue to expand dual enrollment at high schools. The relationship between 2 and 4 year schools should be a partnership.

## WHAT SHOULD BE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INSTRUCTORS AT METRO?

**Adam Gotschall:** My biggest qualification would be, to be politically neutral. Otherwise, it would have to come down to the areas of expertise. For instance: you don't want welders teaching nursing classes (despite the fact they've likely had a few emergency room visits). Otherwise, I'd like to see instructors who are happy, trusting, and have attainable goals for their students.

**Dave Pantos:** In addition to being excellent instructors/professors, Metro's college professors must be prepared to meet students where they are. Many Metro students are first generation students. Many are food-insecure and struggling during COVID-19. Also, for those professors/instructors who are teaching in the trade or certificate programs, they must be up-to-date in terms of the business/economic needs of the community to ensure their instruction provides a quick gateway to high-paying jobs.

## IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Adam Gotschall:** To build better partnerships with business owners. Identify what the community needs from the school. Lower the property tax levy. Get businesses and labor unions involved with recruiting students. I.E. offer the students contracts /agreements. Offer the students competitive pay/benefits, etc....

**Dave Pantos:** We must continue to effectively respond to COVID-19 and its challenges. I am proud that MCC is now offering COVID-19 testing at its South Campus. Finances are crucial for our students. I will prioritize the following: expansion of Pell grants to all students; keeping no tuition increases or at the very least limiting any increase to the rate of inflation; expanding education options in Washington Co. & in West Omaha; and keeping the tax levy flat for our district's taxpayers.

## METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE-DISTRICT 4

**Christopher C. Costello (R):** Education: *University of Nebraska-Lincoln Jan 1987 - Dec 1990 Metropolitan Community College Jan 1991 - Dec 2005 University of Nebraska at Omaha Jan 1991-Dec 1997 ITT Technical Institute-Omaha Jan 2012-Dec 2014 Iowa Western Community College Aug 2015-Aug 2016* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *None*

**Zach Reinhardt (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None* Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *Bachelors of*

*Science in Business Administration, Real Estate and Land Use Economics, University of Nebraska at Omaha 2014 Military Experience: None Volunteer Experience: MAPA Heartland 2050 Housing and Development Committee Co-Chair, 2018-Present; Citylight Arts Project Board, 2018-Present; Greater Omaha Chamber Young Professionals Council, 2019-Present; UNO Real Estate Program Advisory Board, 2016-Present*

### **HOW SHOULD COMMUNITY COLLEGES DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES FROM FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITIES?**

**Christopher C. Costello:** They shouldn't and that's the phrase attitude that four-year universities advertise their students are "special" by a magical wand called the "differentiator" because the one teaching them is the same one teaching the same class down the road at a community college!? The facts be as they may, a person in this State cannot achieve success unless one has the backing of UNL or Creighton, bar none!? Why, because they have Law Schools & Medical School that will rule you off of the top!?

**Zach Reinhardt:** Community colleges should differentiate themselves from four-year (often actually five-year) universities by focusing on providing affordable, real-world education that prepares students for good jobs without the crushing weight of student loan debt. By focusing on trade, technical, and job training education, and in doing so, community colleges can set themselves apart by providing instructors with real-world experience that students can learn from.

### **WHAT SHOULD BE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INSTRUCTORS AT METRO?**

**Christopher C. Costello:** Shouldn't have any of the qualifications as the "feminist" running this League of Women Voters online questionnaires!? Nebraska has some serious issues that need to be addressed in an open society so we can get to the truth & not make it ten times more difficult for activist to speak out against fascist!? How can a lady call herself a feminist and cow tow to a wealthy man's every desire to hide his crimes of passions from the public eye!? Isn't that the heart of feminism speaking up "me to!?"

**Zach Reinhardt:** Because of its focus on real-world education, the qualifications of instructors at Metro should include real-world experience in the topic at hand, whenever possible. Industry involvement at Metro is key to providing students with real-world knowledge. An ability to translate the actual experience in each industry into the classroom should be a priority for any instructor at Metro. While an instructor's educational background should be considered; actual industry experience is equally important.

### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Christopher C. Costello:** Create a student government that can effectively petition the people until elected officials learn to serve the public, first!? Nothing says "public" than Metro Community

College!? Collecting the signatures needed to exact change can only be done in a very short period of time (30 days) juxtaposed to mail in voting which requires no signature & runs longer!? When the disenfranchised work together to recall officials & exact change will be the highest form of education a person can obtain!?

**Zach Reinhardt:** My first-year priorities will focus on supporting the important work Metro is already doing. Metro doesn't need someone to come in and fix it. I will be a board member that works to promote all the good that Metro is doing in our community and more ways for the college to make a positive impact. I will be a champion for the students, providing guidance to ensure that Metro continues to fulfill its mission of delivering relevant, student-centered education to a diverse community of leaders.

### **LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL - DISTRICT 02**

**Carol L. Hahn (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Learning Community Member-2016-present Education: BS Special Education and Elementary Education- Southern Connecticut State College Masters in education- Guidance and Counseling- Northeast Illinois University Volunteer Experience: Board Member Planned Parenthood of the Heartland Board Member JCC of Omaha*

**Nathan S. Zingg (D):** No response received

### **HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE FUTURE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?**

**Carol L. Hahn:** The Learning Community will continue to expand its programming and meet the needs of the community always committed to reaching its goal of closing the opportunity gaps within the 11 school districts it serves. It will continue its partnerships with other organizations such as The Buffet Early Childhood Institute, Project Harmony and One World to accomplish common goals. Through its newly formed Foundation the Learning Community will be an innovator in the community.

### **IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?**

**Carol L. Hahn:** The mission of The Learning Community is to close the opportunity gap between the wealthy areas of the city and the more challenged areas. Through innovative programming and collaborative efforts the research is showing that there have been quantitative gains.

### **HOW CAN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS?**

**Carol L. Hahn:** The Learning community can improve outcomes for all students by listening to the needs of each of the 11 districts, partnering with local districts to create programs that are tailored to

the needs of the individual schools and constantly adjusting to the changing needs

## LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL - DISTRICT 04

**Allen Hager (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Learning Community Coordinating Council 2012-current* Education: *B.A., Louisiana State University M.B.A., Tiffin University* Military Experience: *Air Force* Volunteer Experience: *Former Treasurer, Youth Emergence Services Former Vice-Chair, Omaha Metro Medical Response System (OMMRS) Medical Board*

**Lisa M. Schoenberger (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Bachelor of Journalism in Advertising* Military Experience: *N/A*

**Josh Wigginton (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None* Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *High School Diploma - Millard South Class of 1980* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Not really a volunteer, but I am a Foster parent.*

### HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE FUTURE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?

**Allen Hager:** I believe the Learning Community will continue to provide Early Childhood Education learning opportunities for families in poverty. The collaboration of school districts is vital to the Learning Community success. It's a partnership that has changed since the origins of the body for the better. School Districts see the need for parental engagement and early childhood success that given children a chance to succeed.

**Lisa M. Schoenberger:** I think this is a really exciting time for the Learning Community. I am inspired by the possibilities that the formation of a foundation opens up to continue to deliver programs that are proven successful at a much larger scale. I think the Learning Community has really stepped up to the plate to respond to issues caused by COVID-19 for families in our community and I think that will go a long way in continuing to build positive public relations and showcase its important role.

**Josh Wigginton:** To me the future is always evolving especially now with COVID and remote learning so we need to adjust to the families needs. As we as a community go through COVID together I think each school district can learn from each other and help our parents and children continue to excel together as one.

### IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?

**Allen Hager:** The Learning Community empowers children and families to eliminate the achievement gap through early childhood education, family programs and programs that can help a family both in education and career.

**Lisa M. Schoenberger:** The Learning Community helps support our outstanding public education system by providing resources for programs that enhance the educational experience for students in Douglas and Sarpy counties. It enables districts to tap into and share resources to better address needs in early childhood education, staff enrichment and family involvement, which are all major contributors to the overall education achievement of all of our students.

**Josh Wigginton:** To me the mission of the Learning Community is to help each and every parent and child in a way shape or form that we can. We need to give our kiddos the best chance at success and to whatever we can to make the lives of the kiddos and parents better no matter what. Give each student the opportunity to succeed and bring out the best in each person.

### HOW CAN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS?

**Allen Hager:** Continue to offer high-quality programs that balance taxpayer resources with the needs of the at-risk community that we serve. The Learning Community is looking at a 3rd Center that would be located in an area where multiple districts could benefit. I look forward to hopefully work on that and continue to be a steward of our finite resources. I am currently working with community organizations and our leadership to see how we can create a vocational focus school using current legislation.

**Lisa M. Schoenberger:** The Learning Community has a connection with all 11 school districts, which gives it the unique opportunity to have a very broad impact. By helping connect a local philanthropic community with a single touchpoint that can impact all districts, with the formation of a non-profit, the Learning Community can now help level up educational opportunities at scale without an increased taxpayer burden. The Learning Community will continue to understand and adapt to the unique needs of each district.

**Josh Wigginton:** To continue to offer the best quality of programs for all students and learn how we can continue to support each student in any way we can. We can do this by continuing to be responsible with the tax payers money and make sure we spend the money on the programs that can show a results. We need to listen to our districts as I am sure that our community has great ideas that we could take into consideration I mean after we are here to serve our community.

## LEARNING COMMUNITY COORDINATING COUNCIL - DISTRICT 06

**Andrew Brock (R):** Education: *Ralston High School, 1997; B.S., UNLV, 2008; MBA, Midland University, 2017* Military Experience: *United States Navy 1997-2004* Volunteer Experience: *Boys and Girls Club Stock Market Challenge, Habitat for Humanity Home Builders Blitz*

**Tim Hall (R):** No response received

### HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE FUTURE OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?

**Andrew Brock:** I envision the future of the Learning Community to ensure that all kids across the two counties have access to a free, and equitable early childhood education regardless of their socioeconomic status. I also envision the board to be respectful of tax payers dollars to make sure they are spent in the most efficient and effective ways.

### IN YOUR OWN WORDS, WHAT IS THE MISSION OF THE LEARNING COMMUNITY?

**Andrew Brock:** The mission of the Learning Community is to partner with the school districts of Douglas and Sarpy County to implement more effective practices to measurably improve education outcomes and achieve academic success without regard to social or economic circumstance. It is also to enhance communications to effectively advocate for our mission. With increasing community awareness we will build support for the Learning Community and early childhood education.

### HOW CAN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ALL STUDENTS?

**Andrew Brock:** The Learning Community can improve outcomes for all students by impacting three areas: classroom quality, family engagement and early childhood education. I believe the greatest impact is from birth to Grade 3.

### OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 1

**Ricky Smith (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Omaha Public School Board Sub-District 1 2020* Past Public Office, dates held: *Omaha Public School Board Sub-District 1 2017, 2018, 2019*, Education: *Midland Lutheran College Creighton University Bellevue University University of Nebraska at Omaha* Volunteer Experience: *Empowerment Network Urban League of Nebraska Black Men United Project Manhood Black Police Officers Association Nelson Mandela Elementary School Black Men United United Way of the Midlands Circle of Stars Omaha United for Youth*

**Mort Sullivan (NP):** No response received

### HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

**Ricky Smith:** We have to prepare our students for the jobs and careers of the future, first by exposing them to the things that are out there and push their limits and expectations of what they can become. I have fought for equity within the district for 4 years helping to push our Magnet programs, approving the purchase of 54,000 I-pads to erase the technology gap for our students in OPS creating opportunities in equity. I helped write an Equity, and Inclusion Policy that was approved by the Board in 2020.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

**Ricky Smith:** Since I got on the board we adopted district wide safety measures, provided professional development on mandatory reporting, worked closely with Police, and hired our own Director for Safety and Security. We were able to make budget cuts and reinvest in new security equipment throughout the district. My driving force is always to protect kids and I have no problem when it comes to fighting for our students safety, well-being, and mental health. This includes fighting for our educators as well.

### WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

**Ricky Smith:** To stay out of Omaha. They have no role or use. We serve our children with care, compassion and empathy, all of them. Taking tax payer money to provide education to a targeted population is the exact opposite of equity. Charter schools have zero accountability to the communities they are planted in and intended to serve. We have a rich curriculum and school based supports that help our families and students in most need. Funds needed within our district should never go to Charter Schools.

### OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 3

**Alex P. Gates (D):** Education: *B.A., University of Northern Iowa*, 2005 Volunteer Experience: *Secretary, VP, & President Edison Elementary PTA & Wilson Focus School PTO 2012-current. Board Member and Advisor, Iowa Business Horizons 2010-current. "Introduction to Computer Programming" enrichment teacher, Wilson Focus 2014-current.*

**Nick Thielen (D):** Education: *Colgate University, B.A. Economics and Theater, University of Nebraska, J.D.* Volunteer Experience: *Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (Board), Friends of Nebraska Children (President), Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance (Board), Foster Care Review Organization, Project Harmony (Service League Board), CSI, Nebraska Mock Trial, Dundee Elementary PTO*

### HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

**Alex P. Gates:** 1:1 technology initiatives, when implemented correctly, can help close the Digital Learning Gap and improve educational outcomes. Paired with onboard unlimited data during remote learning, technology can be an equalizer by bringing high-speed internet to all students. Additionally, technology allows for better teacher / parent communication. More than 109 languages are spoken in the homes of OPS families. Modern translation technologies allow new opportunities for dialogue parents and teachers.

**Nick Thielen:** The right technology can help teachers connect with students, expand learning opportunities, and teach digital skills some students may not otherwise obtain. Remote learning has

shown that over-reliance on even moderately complicated technology can also exacerbate inequality, leaving behind those who don't have the resources to make the technology work. In the end, technology is a tool for amplifying good teaching and curriculum - every proposed technology should be tested against that standard.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

**Alex P. Gates:** Congress can adopt common-sense gun reform legislation by banning assault weapons and expanding background checks and reporting. School districts can adopt trauma-informed practices in schools and equip adults in schools to recognize and respond to traumatic stress in their buildings. Restorative practices can also be implemented to repair relationships and foster better learning-centered classrooms, thereby reducing suspensions and helping to end the school-to-prison pipeline.

**Nick Thielen:** We need a learning environment where everyone can focus on the common goal of helping students grow. That starts with reasonable workloads and class sizes that allow a true connection between teachers and students. We need trauma-informed practices that seek to understand catalysts for behaviors instead of simply dispensing punishment. As a community, we must support families, especially affordable housing, health care, and mental health. We have to treat root causes, not just the symptoms.

#### WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

**Alex P. Gates:** None. I don't support charter school legislation for our state. I'm opposed to siphoning tax dollars away from public school for charter schools that can pick-and-choose students without public oversight. Instead, we should continue to support publicly-accountable schools that serve ALL children in our state. We're fortunate to have flexibility to be innovative in Nebraska public schools. Instead of charter schools, we should continue to support and expand our existing innovative programs.

**Nick Thielen:** Public funds should stay in public school districts, especially in OPS. Omaha has schools with exceptional educational opportunities and significant school choice, including what is arguably a public-run charter (Wilson Focus). Publicly-funded private schools often drain resources from the district while drawing only the students that cost the least to educate. In addition, public funds and public education should come with the public oversight and accountability that the school board provides.

#### OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 5

**Spencer Head (R):** No response received

#### OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 7

**Jane Erdenberger (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *None* Past Public Office, dates held: *None* Education: *University of Nebraska - Lincoln BA [1975]; George Washington Law School JD [1978]; University of Nebraska - Omaha BS [2000]* Military Experience: *None* Volunteer Experience: *Nebraska Education Finance Authority Board [two terms]; Omaha Education Association Board [three terms]; OPS One City One School District Task Force; CASA; Belle Ryan PTO; Summer 2020 OPS and YMCA food programs; Empowerment Network*

**Keegan Korf (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *Bachelor of Science in Communications – Journalism; PR/Advertising – University of Nebraska at Omaha Master of Arts in Teaching – College of Saint Mary Master of Education in Teacher Leadership and Learning - Midland University* Military Experience: *N/A* Volunteer Experience: *Mayoral Appoint Board Trustee (Secretary/Treasurer) for the Omaha Public Library Founding Board Member (Vice President) of Felius Cat Café Mentor with Girls Inc. of Omaha Member of the Hanscom Park Neighborhood Association*

#### HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

**Jane Erdenberger:** Better equity and educational outcomes require curriculum meeting each student's abilities and goals. Computers and a list of websites are insufficient. Certified teachers create lesson plans reflecting state standards, assess individual needs and identify websites for lab demonstrations, research projects, unique lectures, virtual field trips, graphic design and current events individualized to stimulate each student and prepare him/her for today's workforce and to responsibly use technology.

**Keegan Korf:** Technology resources should be an embedded part of any school budget and we should be shifting to digital resources and away from expensive and antiquated textbooks. We do know that not every student has access to take-home devices or in-home Internet, but while they are in school, the technology resources need to be available to them. Effective technology use means supporting students in growing their critical thinking and collaboration skills using new tools for learning.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

**Jane Erdenberger:** A healthy environment requires data-driven decisions about contact and sanitation to create and preserve a healthy community and education workforce. Physical safety requires that policies about building access are regularly updated and consistently applied and that interactions of students and staff are based on mutual respect modeled by staff members, discussed in the classroom and expected at all times, to create a positive environment and address the needs of at-risk students.

**Keegan Korf:** School boards who work broadly with state and federal legislation to impact gun laws in addition to using funds to increase support staff for mental health services in schools as opposed to additional police officers are ways to start. Tackling student trauma and mental health is critical. Finally, the most direct impact to school safety is a positive culture through strong administrative leadership which enables teachers to thrive and to build trusting relationships with their students

#### **WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?**

**Jane Erdenberger:** Nebraska's public schools are among the best in the nation. Research shows that charter schools usually do not perform better than public schools with comparable student populations and testing requirements and may increase segregation. Charter schools that receive public funds create a resource shortfall for public schools that are required to meet applicable educational mandates. Problems theoretically addressed by charter schools can be best solved with innovative public education.

**Keegan Korf:** Charter schools and vouchers don't belong in Nebraska. Period. Our public schools are the lifeblood of our state and we intend to keep it that way.

#### **OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 9**

**Tracy Casady (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Omaha Public Schools Board of Education, Subdistrict 9 Education: Master of Arts, Communication - University of Nebraska at Omaha, 2012; Bachelor of Arts, Journalism/Public Relations, Creighton University 1997* Volunteer Experience: *Relay for Life of Greater Omaha, volunteer Girls on the Run, Run Buddy*

**Erik Servellon (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: None - I hope this will be my first office served! Past Public Office, dates held: None - all previous service has been military and volunteer work. Education: Masters of Public Administration - UNO Bachelor of Art, UNO Omaha Central, Class of 2005 Lewis and Clark Middle School Yates Elementary. Military experience: Sergeant, Nebraska Army National Guard, 2008 - Present; Deployment to Afghanistan as a Flight Medic, 2016-2017. Volunteer experience: Board Member, OneWorld Community Health Centers, Inc Board Vice President, Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership President, Metro Young Latino Professionals Association Board Vice Chair, Learning Community Foundation.

#### **HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?**

**Tracy Casady:** Technology is key in our schools for so many reasons and is an area that is constantly changing. Having the right technology and continuing to keep the technology up-to-date is critical. Our schools use technology each day to teach students and prepare them for the future and any career they may choose -

technology is everywhere. Technology is for everyone, it has no bias and it does not discriminate. Technology is key to providing ALL students the best possible educational outcome.

**Erik Servellon:** Remote learning has made technology even more important. At the same time, COVID has shown us that technology is another gap that affects students that come from lower socio-economic status. Investment in technology is needed to provide students with uninterrupted access to the internet and the tech support needed to keep their iPad or computers running. This investment must be spread equitably across ALL schools with special attention to North and South Omaha.

#### **WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?**

**Tracy Casady:** Safety has become an issue that is much larger than it once was with regard to our schools. Now, we face safety concerns in every facet of our schools, from the front door to our playgrounds. Many positive steps have been taken to increase the safety of our students and staff. Ensuring that our budgets allow for funding for new technology that supports safety, such as video security devices for our entrances, SRO's in our most vulnerable schools and building security personnel, to name a few.

**Erik Servellon:** Safety is the most important thing when it comes to student and teachers. Safety requires a comprehensive approach that starts with investing in mental & physical health resources, getting away from punitive forms of punishment for students, and stronger training for staff members to identify and respond to a myriad of situations. It is not enough to hire more safety officers or to invest in physical security equipment, we have to tackle the causes that create danger at school.

#### **WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?**

**Tracy Casady:** I am in favor of school choice and parents making the best choice for their family. Charter schools are a viable choice for many, but they are at a cost. Public schools are free, they are available to all and are a wonderful education choice! I believe that state and local taxes must continue to support our state's public schools. Our public schools are vital and necessary for so many who would otherwise not be able to afford an education. Public schools need continued financial support.

**Erik Servellon:** None. I unequivocally oppose charter schools. I am a product of OPS and the Nebraska educational system and will always fight to generate stronger investment into public schools.

## MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 17

**Amanda McGill Johnson (D):** No response received

**Mike Pate (R):** No response received

**Linda Poole (R):** No response received

## ELKHORN PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 10

**Scot M. Ringenberg (R):** No response received

**Reagan Rosenberg (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *B.S., Nebraska Wesleyan M.S., Survey Research and Methodology, University of Nebraska Lincoln Ed.S School Psychology* Volunteer experience: *Girl Scout Leader, Volunteer coach - YMCA, Destination Imagination Team Manager, Spring Ridge PTO, Nebraska Wesleyan Alumni*

**Jennifer Shatel (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Past Public Office, dates held: *N/A* Education: *UNL graduate - Journalism, Valley High School* Volunteer experience: *Celebration of Giving - Mitten Tree coordinator 3 years and Family Fun Night planner - 2 years for Spring Ridge. Concession stand chair and honor roll display assistant at ERMS. Team mom and photog - girls BB at ESHS. Chair of my church council.*

**Renee Vokt (R):** No response received

## HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?

**Reagan Rosenberg:** This year has taught us more than ever before the importance of technology in schools. When all students have access to devices and the internet, we start with an equal playing field. Beyond equipment and access, we need to continue developing dynamic ways that teachers can work through technology to meet each student's needs. Positive educational outcomes happen when teachers are able to meet a child's individual needs. Technology is a tool for our teachers.

**Jennifer Shatel:** Today's technology is one of the tools schools can use to educate our students, along with face to face teaching, textbooks, group projects and experiments/labs. Access to technology can help keep education moving forward when in-person classes are not possible, and keep students who opt for distance learning connected with their teachers and classmates. Ensuring all students have access to this technology is a top priority. Today's students need to know how best to use the current technology.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?

**Reagan Rosenberg:** Safety always has to be a top priority. Physical safety needs to be maintained and practiced by students and staff, through drills and instruction. Students also need to be safe from bullying and discrimination. The social emotional needs of our students must continue to be addressed through curriculum that our teachers and counselors teach.

**Jennifer Shatel:** Locked doors, security cameras, and safety plans are great tools to help keep our schools safe. The anonymous reporting system EPS unveiled recently is also a great tool - allowing students to report possible threats they may overhear or see. The motto - see something, say something - should be taught and encouraged. The presence of uniformed school resource officers may also be a deterrent to school violence.

## WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

**Reagan Rosenberg:** Charter schools are not good for Nebraska. Charter schools, unlike private schools, take public education funds away from public schools. Charter schools do not have the proper oversight to ensure that the tax dollars being given to them are being used wisely to educate their students.

**Jennifer Shatel:** I believe Nebraska public and private schools offer excellent educational opportunities for our students. I believe parental involvement within the current schools is key and should be encouraged within schools that are struggling.

## RALSTON MAYOR

**Donald A. Groesser (R):** No response received

## RALSTON CITY COUNCIL - WARD 1

**Tim Brousek (R):** No response received

**Maureen Konwinski (NP):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Ralston City Council Ward 1 1992-present* Education: *BA Creighton University MA University of Nebraska at Omaha 36 additional graduate hours 51 hours International Baccalaureate* Military Experience: *none* Volunteer Experience: *RABA helper*

## WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Maureen Konwinski:** I am very familiar with the city and its functions. I have worked hard to keep Ralston independent and growing, and dedicated many years to Ralston's people and workers. The new Hinge Project will add housing and businesses to the downtown. As a member of the council and Historical

Architectural committee, I want to make sure the new development preserves the old. As a finance committee member, my concerns are insurance, providing services, jobs, and updates related to Covid 19.

**IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Maureen Konwinski:** My priorities are: Continued progress on the Hinge Project Getting the Arena back open with Covid protection in place Continued work on streets and other infrastructure Paying off bonds and other debts

**WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY/COUNTY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?**

**Maureen Konwinski:** Covid 19 has temporarily closed the Ralston Arena, businesses, etc. We need to get them back in operation as well as getting the parks and playing fields safely opened. We are working with the Arena, businesses, Ralston high school, and the sports committee to achieve this. Paying off debt. We have applied for CARES act help, and are budgeting. Infrastructure. Our One and Six Year plan addresses the street repair needs.

**RALSTON CITY COUNCIL - WARD 2**

**Lee Fideline (R):** No response received

**RALSTON CITY COUNCIL - WARD 6**

**Ben Preis (D):** No response received

**RALSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD, DISTRICT 54**

**Heather R. Johnson (NP):** No response received

**Patrick McPherson (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *No current public offices held.* Past Public Office, dates held: *Papio Natural Resources District, 1978-82; Nebraska State Board of Education, 2014-18* Education: *Bachelor's degree, Creighton University* Military experience: *U.S. Army Reserves* Volunteer experience: *Nebraska CHIP Board, Nebraska Game and Parks Youth Fishing Instructor Heartland React, Cloisters on the Platte, CHAD, American Diabetes Association, United Way, Omaha Charter Review Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, Foster Child Review Board*

**Jodi Norton (NP):** No response received

**Catherine N. Payne (NP):** No response received

**Robin Richards (D):** Current Public Office, dates held: Ralston Public School Board District 54 11/20-present. I filled a vacancy. Education: Ralston High Graduated 1999 University of Nebraska

at Omaha Graduated 2015 Current Grad Student at Colorado State University. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: Board Service: Omaha Children's Choir, Bellevue Choral Arts Society, Vesper Concert Series.

**Merv Riepe (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: None. Past Public Office, dates held: Nebraska State Legislator. State Senator, LD12, Ralston and Millard, 2014-2018. Education: Bachelor's degree, Business Finance, University of Nebraska at Omaha Master degree, Health Policy and Management, The University of Iowa. Military experience: U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman. Volunteer experience: Scoutmaster, Ralston Post, Boy Scouts of America. Board, Mid-America Council of Boy Scouts Sub-chair, United Way of the Midlands Board, Children's Square President's Advisory Board, Nebr. Wesleyan Univ. Board, CHAD Advisory Board, Omaha Symphony

**HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?**

**Patrick McPherson:** The increase in 'free lunch' program numbers cries out for greater equity. The recent decision of OPS to purchase I-Pads for all and provide 'hotspot' connectivity not only deals with the pandemic but ensures equity for those who most need it. It prepares teachers and students for the future using Zoom-type programs and learning activities as well as potential teacher shortages. Using technology to provide books and additional learning material, particularly for K-3, provides great opportunity.

**Robin Richards:** When implementing Ralston's Return to Learning Plan, it became very clear that technology was the core of the conversation. Every day we are learning just how important access to technology is to the success of our students whether they are at home or in the classroom. By ensuring vital internet access to every child and a 1 to 1 technology plan through out our schools, we are giving every child equal opportunity to access the technology they need as they navigate this Covid era of education.

**Merv Riepe:** Software and hardware training and support to students, parents, guardians, teachers and administrators. Identify best-practices in other school systems. We must evaluate and assume risks, working to avoid false starts and the highest and best use of time and financial resources. Technology is a high priority means to guarantee equal opportunity for each child.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?**

**Patrick McPherson:** The 'open classroom' concept in several Ralston schools is outdated and puts multiple numbers of classes in potential danger from intruders. Students need to be in individual lockable classrooms. Buildings need to be upgraded so there is only one lockable, monitored entrance. Schools must have emergency procedures that are written and frequently reviewed and each school should have regular contact with law enforcement so that any emergencies can be handled quickly, capably and knowledgeably.

**Robin Richards:** A well developed and widely communicated safety plan is fundamental to ensuring safety in schools and at school events for both our staff and students. Schools must have trained staff and administrators that help to monitor and deescalate tough situations and find the proper after care needed for each situation. The ability to intercede and redirect should be at the forefront of the schools policies in this area.

**Merv Riepe:** Must have an engaged student body, faculty, support staff and administration to be observant of events, comments, social media, rumors and interactions among students. Must have and respond to mental health needs. Buildings and parking lots need modern camera along with secure and limited entrances. Emergency drills essential. Health protocols and PPE supplies must exist and ensured a clean environment based on scientific best-practices. Communication to stakeholders must be ongoing two-way

#### WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?

**Patrick McPherson:** Nebraska offers school choice allowing children to find educational opportunities in other districts and provides for private and parochial schools and home schooling. These choices exist in the Ralston District. The Nebraska Legislature has not authorized charter schools although they exist in more than 40 states. Results for them vary and most are in very large communities. I favor school choice for all parents but the question is moot until parents and the Legislature act to permit them.

**Robin Richards:** I do not think Charter schools should have a place in Nebraska. They should not have access to the same funds as public schools until they follow state and federal guidelines. The lack of oversight in this institutions leaves vulnerable student populations at risk of abuse and higher rates of expulsion. Their lack of inclusion policies and practices should keep them from accessing government funding.

**Merv Riepe:** Education, health and judiciary must always place the welfare of the child first. Because no two children are the same, we need an education plan for each child constructed in concert with parents or guardians. Ralston is a small school system, hence, charter schools would distract from and public schools. I believe a place exists for home schooling and private/parochial schools.

#### BENNINGTON MAYOR

**Zac Johns (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: *Bennington City Council Representative 2016-current*. Past Public Office, dates held: *None*. Education: *Graduate of Archbishop Bergan High School 2005 Studied Business Management at MCC*. Military experience: *None*. Volunteer experience: *President of Bennington Chamber of Commerce 2015-2020*.

#### WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Johns:** My Wife and I have been residents of Bennington for more than 10 years. I am a business owner in the community. My experience in leading the Bennington Chamber of Commerce for the last 5 years along with serving on the City Council since 2016 have positioned me with the knowledge, resources, and skillset to lead our community

#### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITY?

**Johns:** Finish construction on the 156th st. Project. Also evaluate the need for more accessible pedestrian traffic in our community. I believe we can incorporate expanding our paths and sidewalks with other future improvement projects.

#### WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY/COUNTY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?

**Johns:** High tax rates- Reduced by continued expansion in both housing and commercial development to reduce the tax burden on each household.

#### BENNINGTON CITY COUNCIL - WARD 1

**Joshua L. Dowding (R):** No response received

#### BENNINGTON CITY COUNCIL - WARD 2

**Clint Adams (NP):** Education: *Bellevue University May 2013 Bachelor of Science: Business Administration and Management* Military Experience: *February 2005 - August 2014 Air National Guard - Intelligence Analyst* Volunteer Experience: *Ridgewood HOA Board Member - Sept 2019 to present*

**Jeff Ryan (R):** No response received

#### WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Clint Adams:** I am a logical thinker, conservative with our family's budget, communicate well with others and listen to both sides of an argument before taking action. My degree in management and my military experience of having to make decisions for the greater good has allowed me to be a successful manager of our team at work and has prepared me to have level-headed thinking as a board member on our HOA. My wife and I

own a business in Bennington, we are involved in youth sports and volunteer where we can.

### **IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Clint Adams:** Develop and execute a communication plan with my ward to keep everyone informed and dive into the budget to make sure our taxpayer dollars are being used wisely; looking for any possible inefficiencies we can correct.

### **WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY/COUNTY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?**

**Clint Adams:** 1. Revenue struggles: we need more commercial growth in order to have a more robust tax base. 2. Dealing with an influx of SIDs outside of our city limits and those residents looking to our city for amenities: Parks, food, shopping and other entertainment. 3. Commercial growth needing to keep up with rapid residential growth: I believe in working with the Chamber in finding ways to attract more retail to town and then once we do start seeing those business open up, how we can help sustain them.

## **BENNINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION - DISTRICT 59**

**Terri Calabro (R):** No response received.

**Tim Dreessen (R):** No response received.

**Kara Neuverth (R):** No response received.

**Chris Reiner (R):** No response received.

**Darren Sieknan (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: 2002 to Present, Bennington Public School Board District #59. Education: Bachelor of Science, Agriculture; University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Volunteer experience: Maplewood Methodist Preschool Board; Bennington Public Schools Foundation Board; YMCA Coach, Bennington Athletic League Coach

**Allyson Crossman Slobotski (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: None. Past Public Office, dates held: None. Education: University of Nebraska - Lincoln - Juris Doctorate; Texas Christian University - Master of Accounting; Texas Christian University - BBA Accounting & Finance; Omaha Central High School. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: Women's Center for Advancement - first Guild President; Midlands Mentoring Partnership - Treasurer; Bennington Elementary PTO Board Member; Newport Landing Homeowner's Association - Treasurer; University of Nebraska - Omaha Sorority Academic Advisor.

### **HOW CAN SCHOOLS USE TECHNOLOGY TO FOSTER BETTER EQUITY AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES?**

**Darren Siekman:** During my time on the board, we have invested to become a "1 to 1" school system. In grades 7-12 students are issued a chromebook and in the elementary schools we have combinations of computer labs and iPads which provide a device for every student. Distance learning last spring made us better at technology, but we will never be "done". Discovering and utilizing best practices will be a focus for me.

**Allyson Crossman Slobotski:** Technology should be used to ensure students receive individualized education that meets their needs and evaluates their successes. Using technology to provide training for our teachers and administrators enhances the educational experience for all. As technology becomes more and more critical to life after high school, we need to make sure all students have the tools to be successful and starts in the district.

### **WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN OUR SCHOOLS?**

**Darren Siekman:** Common sense and vigilance are the best tools we have. We are very fortunate in Bennington to have a highly engaged community of parents and community members who "watch out" for each other. The addition of a school resource officer has already proven effective in key situations, Deputy Baker is awesome. Last but not least, getting advice from local, yet nationally recognized medical professionals and experts has shaped our plan for dealing with COVID now and in the future.

**Allyson Crossman Slobotski:** Ensuring the safety of students, teachers, and all staff employed by the School District begins with leadership from the Board of Education. I would commit to working together, collaboratively, to ensure proper planning and adequate training is in place. I would emphasize the importance of communication, technology, and employing best practices in the area to do what is necessary to ensure safety for all. It is important everyone believes in the plan and truly feels safe at work everyday.

### **WHAT ROLE, IF ANY, SHOULD CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE IN THE NEBRASKA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM?**

**Darren Siekman:** While I have not done much research on charter schools, I would ask which students are we trying to serve and what is the desired educational outcome from a charter? The strength of public schools is the ability of local constituents to make decisions which are best for their kids and community. Would a charter school still allow that input? School funding and property taxes are always a challenge in Nebraska, could a charter school be funded in a way that is not detrimental?

**Allyson Crossman Slobotski:** As a graduate of Omaha Public Schools and with children in Bennington Public Schools, I'm a huge public school supporter. Nebraska is very lucky to have a fantastic public educational system well known for its diversity and quality education. While Charter Schools may be a helpful

tool in other states with struggling public school systems, I do not believe adding charter schools in Nebraska will enhance the existing system in such a way that it warrants a role.

experience: President and founder of the Valley Days Foundation which organizes and funds community events and community betterment including flood / disaster relief. President of the Valley Waterloo Business Association. ENCAP Board Member.

**Steve Peoples (NP):** No response received.

## Boys Town Village Board of Trustees

**Christopher Haack (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: I am currently on the Boys Town Village Board. Past Public Office, dates held: None. Education: Bachelors in Psychology with a minor in Business from the University of Northern Iowa. Military experience: None. Volunteer experience: Was on the American Red Cross board of directors in Iowa, board of directors for Veridian Credit Union, Participated in the CROP walk and Honey Sunday for many years. Many other volunteer activities at Boys Town.

**Jeff D. Lindley (R):** No response received.

### WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Christopher Haack:** I have been a resident of Boys Town for 17 years and really care about the direction we are going. I also want the best for Boys Town.

### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Christopher Haack:** If elected, I would like to continue to keep Boys Town in the direction we are headed. I want to make sure that Boys Town is a safe place for the family teachers and youth who live here.

### WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?

**Christopher Haack:** 1. Safety - I am trying to keep Boys Town one of the safest communities to live in. We have recently added speed bumps and we are continuing to work with the police to make sure they continue to do their jobs well. 2. Campus Beautification - When COVID is under control, I want to make sure that Boys Town continues to be a great place to come and visit. 3. Pride - I want the people of Boys Town to be proud of where they live and what they do here.

## Valley Mayor

**Cindy Grove (R):** Current Public Office, dates held: Valley City Council December 2016 - Present. Past Public Office, dates held: N/A. Education: Bachelor of Science, Business Administration Bellevue University 2007. Military experience: N/A. Volunteer

### WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?

**Cindy Grove:** I am extremely passionate about the community of Valley and it's residents. I have demonstrated this numerous times through community projects including organizing events, flood relief efforts and serving on several other non-profit boards and the City Council. In addition, I have the experience and skill set needed to help the City of Valley navigate the growth spurt that began several years ago to ensure we are making the most practical decisions for our city and residents long term

### IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?

**Cindy Grove:** To continue to upgrade the City's technology platforms to better serve our residents and employees and evaluate employee wages and benefits. Upgrading outdated technology will create easier access to City services and efficiencies for City employees in their day to day jobs. These efficiencies and investments for City employees will allow them more time to take a proactive approach in assisting residents.

### WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?

**Cindy Grove:** 1) Growth: We need to take a more proactive role in the population growth spurt we are experiencing to ensure we are positioning ourselves the best for our residents and for the future. 2) Economic development: The growth of economic development and small businesses is lagging. We need to do a better job of encouraging and enticing small business growth within our community. 3) Technology: We need to invest in technology and our current employees to more resourceful and proactive.

## Valley City Council

**Alan Badour (NP):** No response received.

**Elizabeth Lizzy Lowndes (R):** No response received.

**Chris TenEyck (R):** Douglas County West High School Metropolitan Community College

**Bryon Ueckert (R):** No response received.

**WHY ARE YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR THIS POSITION?**

**Chris TenEyck:** I was born and raised in Valley, and I feel strongly that what Valley needs right now is someone that has spent their life here to do what is right for the community.

**IF ELECTED, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST YEAR PRIORITIES?**

**Chris TenEyck:** If elected my first priority would be to start cleaning up the town itself. Valley is growing quickly with the numerous lake communities that have been built within the last few years, but we need to focus more time repairing streets and fixing homes here in town.

**WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES YOUR COMMUNITY/COUNTY IS FACING AND HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS THEM?**

**Chris TenEyck:** 1. Keeping taxes lower- With Valley having four major companies within city limits taxes for the citizens should be lower. 2. 5 year plan- Valley needs to work on a 5 year plan on repairing/ maintaining roads. 3. Communication with the citizens- Multiple projects have been done here in Valley without the citizens knowing until the project had either began or was finished.

**Amendments & Initiatives**

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 1**

A constitutional amendment to eliminate slavery or involuntary servitude as a punishment for crime.

- A vote FOR this constitutional amendment would eliminate a provision in the Nebraska Constitution that states that slavery or involuntary servitude may be used as a punishment for conviction of a crime.

- A vote AGAINST this constitutional amendment would leave the language regarding slavery or involuntary servitude unchanged in the Nebraska Constitution.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 2**

A constitutional amendment to authorize the Legislature to allow cities and villages to pledge property taxes as part of a redevelopment project for a period not to exceed twenty years if, due to a high rate of unemployment combined with a high poverty rate as determined by law, more than one-half of the property in the project area is extremely blighted.

- A vote FOR this constitutional amendment would amend the Nebraska Constitution to authorize the Legislature to extend the

maximum length of time for the repayment of indebtedness related to tax-increment financing from 15 years to 20 years if more than one-half of the property in the project area is designated as extremely blighted.

- A vote AGAINST this constitutional amendment would leave the maximum length of time for repayment of indebtedness unchanged at 15 years.

**INITIATIVE MEASURE 428**

Shall Nebraska statutes be amended to: (1) reduce the amount that delayed deposit services licensees, also known as payday lenders, can charge to a maximum annual percentage rate of thirty-six percent; (2) prohibit payday lenders from evading this rate cap; and (3) deem void and uncollectable any delayed deposit transaction made in violation of this rate cap?

- A vote "FOR" will amend Nebraska statutes to: (1) reduce the amount that delayed deposit services licensees, also known as payday lenders, can charge to a maximum annual percentage rate of thirty-six percent; (2) prohibit payday lenders from evading this rate cap; and (3) deem void and uncollectable any delayed deposit transaction made in violation of this rate cap.

- A vote "AGAINST" will not cause the Nebraska statutes to be amended in such manner.

**INITIATIVE MEASURE 429**

Shall the Nebraska Constitution be amended to state that laws may be enacted to provide for the authorization, regulation, and taxation of all forms of games of chance to be conducted by licensees within licensed racetrack enclosures in Nebraska?

- A vote "FOR" will amend the Nebraska Constitution to state that laws may be enacted to provide for the authorization, regulation, and taxation of all forms of games of chance to be conducted by licensees within licensed racetrack enclosures in Nebraska.

- A vote "AGAINST" will not cause the Nebraska Constitution to be amended in such manner.

**INITIATIVE MEASURE 430**

Shall a statute be enacted which: (1) allows games of chance to be conducted by authorized gaming operators within licensed racetrack enclosures in Nebraska; (2) establishes a Nebraska Gaming Commission to license and regulate such gaming; and (3) amends and repeals existing sections of law to harmonize provisions consistent with the enactment of such statute?

- A vote "FOR" will enact a statute which: (1) allows games of chance to be conducted by authorized gaming operators within licensed racetrack enclosures in Nebraska; (2) establishes a Nebraska Gaming Commission to license and regulate such

gaming; and (3) amends and repeals existing sections of law to harmonize provisions consistent with the enactment of such statute.

- A vote "AGAINST" will not cause such a statute to be enacted.

### INITIATIVE MEASURE 431

Shall a statute be enacted which: (1) imposes a 20% annual tax on gross gaming revenue from games of chance operated at licensed racetrack locations; (2) distributes 75% of such gaming tax revenues to the State for credit of 2.5% to both the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund and General Fund, and 70% to the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund; and (3) distributes 25% of such gaming tax revenues to the county where the licensed racetrack is located, or, if the racetrack is located partially within a city or

village, distributes this percentage evenly between the county and city or village?

- A vote "FOR" will enact a statute which: (1) imposes a 20% annual tax on gross gaming revenue from games of chance operated at licensed racetrack locations; (2) distributes 75% of such gaming tax revenues to the State for credit of 2.5% to both the Compulsive Gamblers Assistance Fund and General Fund, and 70% to the Property Tax Credit Cash Fund; and (3) distributes 25% of such gaming tax revenues to the county where the licensed racetrack is located, or, if the racetrack is located partially within a city or village, distributes this percentage evenly between the county and city or village.

- A vote "AGAINST" will not cause such a statute to be enacted.

The following is a link to the Nebraska Bar Association poll regarding the judges on the ballot:

[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nebar.com/resource/resmgr/for\\_the\\_public/2020\\_judicial-poll\\_complete.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nebar.com/resource/resmgr/for_the_public/2020_judicial-poll_complete.pdf)

***If You Live in Douglas County***

Return your ballot to the  
**Douglas County  
Election Commission**  
by USPS mail, or use  
Drop Boxes at these locations:



**Douglas County Election Commission**  
west of main entrance in parking lot  
12220 W Center, Omaha

42nd & Farnam (NW corner of the intersection), Omaha

4805 N 72 Street (near the Goodwill store), Omaha

321 N 76 Street (near the Asian Market,  
between Cass & Dodge street), Omaha

Spring Ridge Shopping Center - 178 & Pacific Sts., Omaha

**City/County Building**  
Between 18th & 19th on Farnam, near sidewalk  
1819 Farnam Street, Omaha

**South Omaha Library**  
Relocated: East Side Parking Lot  
2808 Q Street, Omaha

**Charles B. Washington Branch Library**  
Southwest corner of building  
2868 Ames Avenue, Omaha

**Ralston Police Department**  
Southwest corner of building  
7400 Main Street, Ralston

**Milton R. Abrahams Branch Library**  
South of main entrance  
5111 N 90th Street, Omaha

**Douglas County Engineer's Office**  
Near sidewalk by parking stalls  
15505 W Maple Road, Omaha

**Millard Public Schools Foundation**  
Northwest corner of building  
5225 South 159th Avenue, Omaha

**Bess Johnson Elkhorn Branch Library**  
Northeast corner of building  
2100 Reading Plaza, Elkhorn