



JCRC Omaha 2026 Jewish Voter Guide on State and Local Races

Candidate Positions on Issues of Importance to Nebraska's Jewish Community and Our Neighbors

NEBRASKA STATE SENATOR

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Antisemitism and leadership

1. Antisemitism can come from across the political and ideological spectrum. What responsibility do elected officials have to recognize and speak out against antisemitism, including when it comes from members of their own party, political allies, or supporters?

Elected officials have a responsibility to lead by example. Antisemitism is a unique and persistent form of hatred that requires clear, unambiguous condemnation regardless of where it originates, whether from political allies, supporters, or the opposing party. As a Senator, I believe that staying silent in the face of bigotry is a dereliction of duty. My door is always open to the Jewish community to ensure I am hearing your concerns directly.

2. How do you define antisemitism, and how would you distinguish it from legitimate political speech or criticism?

I look to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition as a vital tool for identifying antisemitism. While Nebraskans have a robust right to engage in political speech and criticize any government's policies, including those of Israel, such speech becomes antisemitic when it uses double standards, dehumanizing stereotypes, or calls for harm towards Jewish people.

3. Community harmony in a polarized environment: Political rhetoric can contribute either to division or to mutual respect. What responsibility do elected officials have

to avoid language that stereotypes or scapegoats religious, racial, ethnic, immigrant, or other communities, particularly during campaigns?

Political rhetoric should build mutual respect, not division. Language that scapegoats religious, racial, ethnic, immigrant, or other communities has real-world consequences for community safety and mental health. I am committed to universal human dignity and strive to lead in this manner.

Hate and bias

4. Should Nebraska codify IHRA legislatively so its applicability extends beyond what a governor can accomplish through executive action. How would you respond to acts of hate or bias affecting any community in your district or across Nebraska, and what legislative action, if any, do you believe is appropriate?

I support codifying a clear definition of antisemitism to ensure that state agencies and educational institutions have the tools they need to identify and address bias. When acts of hate occur, I will stand with the affected community, advocate for the enforcement of existing laws, and work on legislative solutions should they be indicated that strengthen our state's ability to protect all of its citizens.

Community security

5. Jewish institutions and other houses of worship have faced increased security concerns in recent years. What role do you believe elected officials should play in helping communities feel safe while preserving an open and welcoming civic environment?

Everyone has the fundamental right in America to worship and gather without fear. I support ensuring that faith-based institutions have the resources and partnerships with law enforcement necessary to maintain security. In the 2023-2024 biennium I was proud to work with Senator Brewer, my colleagues, and the Jewish community to adopt the first of its kind Nebraska Nonprofit Security Grant Program allowing houses of worship and other high risk nonprofits to obtain state funding for physical security updates. We must balance these safety needs with the preservation of an open, welcoming civic environment that does not isolate communities.

Church and State

6. Religious liberty includes both the right to practice one's faith and protection against government establishment of religion. As a state senator, how would you balance these principles when considering legislation affecting public schools and other government institutions, particularly when the religious beliefs of the majority differ from those of religious minorities?

Religious liberty and freedom to practice one's own faith is a hallmark of American democracy. I am proud of my history in the legislature as it relates to ensuring that government institutions and public schools are inclusive spaces for all and that no one religious view is brought into the classroom.

Education

7. What role should the Legislature play in addressing antisemitism and other forms of religious discrimination in Nebraska's K-12 schools and public colleges and universities?

The Legislature should ensure that K-12 and higher education institutions have robust, enforceable anti-discrimination policies. It is also important to consider curriculum standards that include Holocaust education and promote a deep understanding of the diverse histories that make up Nebraska. We need to work together to ensure robust implementation of LB 888 that passed in 2022 to require the State Board of Education to adopt standards for education on the Holocaust and other acts of genocide in Nebraska schools.

Budget

8. Nebraska faces a significant projected budget shortfall. What two specific actions would you support to restore structural balance, and what area of the state budget would you prioritize for protection?

In 2023, we passed significant tax cuts when the state had the budgetary surplus to absorb them, without pairing them with a plan for what happens when revenue slows down (for example, budget circuit breakers and connecting economic incentives to performance). The tax cuts did not lead to the promised revenue performance and now the bill is due.

In terms of balancing the budget, we need to review exemptions and incentives that no longer serve a public purpose before we touch anything that hits working families. We need

to protect the services that make this state worth living in: roads, schools, the workforce pipeline, and mental health and Medicaid. This necessary and cost-saving infrastructure is usually first on the chopping block in a budgetary crisis, but it is the last thing Nebraskans can afford to lose.

Reserves

9. Nebraska entered 2023 with historically strong General Fund balances and nearly \$1 billion in its Cash Reserve Fund. What lessons should the Legislature draw from the fiscal decisions of recent years, and what spending, revenue, or tax-policy changes would you support to restore long-term fiscal stability?

The primary lesson from recent years is that strong reserves are a vital tool for economic stability, but they must be managed with a view toward long-term sustainability rather than short-term gains. I support a balanced approach that prioritizes structural reforms over reliance on one-time sweeps. This includes auditing current tax expenditures to ensure they provide a demonstrated public benefit and stabilizing revenue sources to protect essential services such as education, mental health, and public safety from being raided when there are shortfalls. The state is in desperate need of a strategic plan and 5, 10, and 15 year vision. My goal is to ensure that fiscal decisions are grounded in long-term predictability, protecting the taxpayer while maintaining the core investments that allow Nebraska's families to thrive.

Food insecurity & Affordability

10. Food insecurity is growing and profoundly impacting families across Nebraska. What role should state government play in addressing hunger, and how would your administration approach Nebraska's participation in and administration of federal nutrition programs?

Food insecurity is a crisis of well-being. Nebraska should fully participate in and efficiently administer all available federal nutrition programs to ensure no families go hungry. I oppose efforts to add unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles to these life-saving programs. I have been a strong collaborator with organizations like the Food Bank of the Heartland, I have

supported policies like universal school meals and the elimination of school lunch debt being the subject of collections.

11. With rising home prices and property taxes, homeownership is becoming increasingly difficult for many families. What would you do to make homeownership more affordable while ensuring local governments have the resources they need?

I support expanding the homestead exemption and implementing circuit breakers to ensure that retirees and working families are not taxed out of their homes as property values rise. We must provide real, targeted relief rather than broad shifts that primarily benefit the wealthiest Nebraskans.

Workforce

12. What policies would you support to address Nebraska's workforce shortages, including attracting and retaining legal immigrants and refugees who can contribute to Nebraska's economy?

Removing credentialing barriers: We have many skilled immigrants and refugees already in our state whose talents are underutilized due to bureaucratic hurdles. I have championed legislation in the past to streamline professional licensure, and will continue to work on overcoming bureaucratic hurdles for foreign-trained professionals, allowing them to fill critical gaps in healthcare, education, and skilled trades.

Investing in integration infrastructure: Economic growth is linked to successful integration. I supported increased investment in language acquisition programs, career-pathway job placement services, and housing stability initiatives. These supports help newcomers not only settle but fully participate in and thrive within the Nebraska economy.

By fostering a state that is inclusive, culturally competent, and economically dynamic, we can ensure that every individual, whether born here or having arrived in search of a better life, has the opportunity to contribute to a prosperous Nebraska.

Diverse representation

13. Relationships across differences: How would you build relationships with Jewish and other faith and minority communities—including communities whose members may disagree with you politically—and ensure they have meaningful access to you if you are elected?

I am proud of the relationships I have been able to build with the JCRC during my first four years in office. I value the input I receive from the community, particularly when legislation that has a direct impact on the community is being considered. My hope is to continue to build on this relationship should I be re-elected for a second term.

14. How do you approach policymaking in a culturally and religiously diverse legislative district, and how will you engage with faith-based and minority communities if elected?

Effective policymaking in a diverse district begins with intentional listening and learning. I frequently speak on the legislative floor about the challenges and responsibilities we have as state level lawmakers to consider the impact of the legislation we pass on not just one district or one community, but the entire state. To engage with faith-based and minority communities, I will continue to prioritize an open-door office policy and ensure that leaders from all communities have a direct line to my office, not just to voice concerns but to help shape solutions together.

Israel and the Jewish community

15. Israel is an important part of the organized religious, cultural, and communal identity of most Jewish Nebraskans even while holding a wide range of views about Israeli government policies. How do you approach conversations about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a way that respects both legitimate political disagreement and the concerns of Jewish constituents about antisemitism?

I approach these conversations with a deep respect for the profound cultural and communal identity that Israel represents for the Jewish community. I strive to distinguish between legitimate policy debates and rhetoric that veers into antisemitism or targets Jewish Nebraskans for the actions of a foreign government. My goal is to foster a dialogue that is informed, respectful, and sensitive to the history of the region and the concerns of my constituents. I am always open to learning.

