



**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**

**Secretary of State
Scott Petersen**

Antisemitism and leadership

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?

Antisemitism is wrong, whether it comes from the political left, the political right, or anywhere else. The same is true of hatred directed toward any person because of their faith, race, or ethnicity.

Elected officials have a responsibility to speak clearly and consistently against antisemitism, even when it comes from people within their own political coalition. Leadership requires applying principles consistently, not selectively.

As Secretary of State, I will serve every Nebraskan fairly and respectfully. While the office is primarily administrative, leaders should help set a tone of civility, respect, and equal treatment under the law.

Israel and the Jewish community

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?

The relationship between the United States and Israel has long been an important strategic partnership built on shared democratic values and security interests. I recognize that members of Nebraska's Jewish community hold a variety of views on Israeli government policies, just as Americans hold differing views on many public issues.

I believe it is possible to have respectful conversations about Middle East policy while drawing a clear distinction between criticism of government policies and antisemitism directed at Jewish people. Every Nebraskan deserves to know they will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of political differences.

As Secretary of State, my responsibility is to serve all citizens fairly while remaining accessible to Nebraska's Jewish community and every community across our state.

Boycotting, Divesting and Sanctions against Israel

How do you plan to enforce state laws or executive orders that require the Secretary of State's office to vet or flag registered businesses or non-profits that participate in boycotts against Israel?

The Secretary of State's responsibility is to faithfully administer Nebraska law. If Nebraska law requires the Secretary of State's office to review business filings or certifications relating to state contracting or other administrative responsibilities, I will enforce those requirements fairly, consistently, and without regard to politics.

Administrative decisions should always be based on the law, established procedures, and objective standards rather than personal opinion.

IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Do you support the state's official adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, and how would you apply that definition to the administrative duties of your office?

I support Nebraska's adoption of the IHRA working definition as an educational and administrative tool to help identify and understand antisemitism.

As Secretary of State, my office would apply any requirements established by Nebraska law fairly and consistently. The Secretary of State should faithfully administer the law while ensuring every individual and organization interacting with the office is treated equally and respectfully.

Community security

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?

Every Nebraskan should feel safe gathering to worship, learn, and participate in civic life. Jewish institutions, churches, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship all deserve protection from violence, intimidation, and threats.

While the Secretary of State is not a law enforcement office, elected officials should support collaboration among state and local agencies, encourage preparedness, and stand publicly against acts of hatred and intimidation.

Public safety and religious liberty are fundamental responsibilities of government, and no one should feel unsafe because of their faith.

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?

Words matter. Public officials should disagree with one another vigorously on policy while avoiding rhetoric that unfairly stereotypes or scapegoats entire groups of people.

Our country is strongest when we judge individuals by their character and actions rather than by religion, ethnicity, race, or political affiliation.

I believe elected officials should model respectful disagreement, encourage civil dialogue, and remember that public service is about bringing people together to solve problems rather than dividing communities for political advantage.

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?

Absolutely.

If elected, I will serve every Nebraskan, regardless of political party, faith, or background. I believe the Secretary of State should be accessible and willing to meet with community organizations, faith leaders, business groups, civic organizations, and local officials throughout Nebraska.

Listening does not require agreement, but it does require respect. I will make it a priority to maintain open communication, hear concerns directly, and ensure every community knows it has a voice and a fair opportunity to be heard by the Secretary of State's office.