

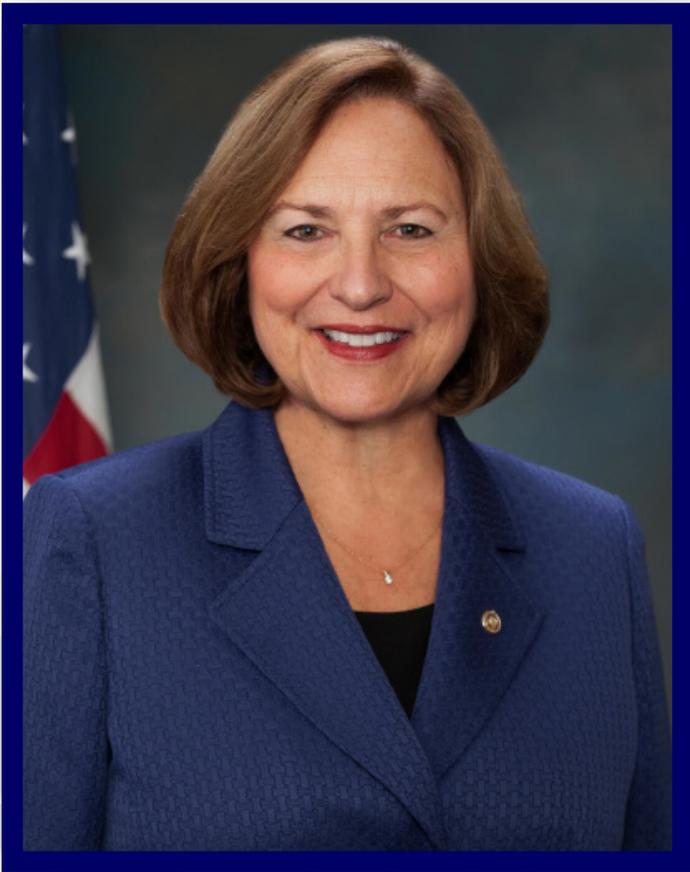
Working for You

A Look Back on My
Work in the 113th
Congress

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United States Senator
for Nebraska

— December 2014 —

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As we prepare for a new year and a new Congress, I am excited for the prospect of a properly functioning United States Senate – one that the American people deserve. We have an opportunity for a fresh start that ends the era of partisan division and focuses instead on making progress on issues impacting middle class families. I am optimistic for what the future holds.

Despite gridlock on many big issues in Congress these past two years, I am pleased to report I was able to work with my colleagues to get important things done for Nebraskans and all Americans. I remain committed to working with my colleagues in both parties to achieve positive, meaningful, and lasting solutions to our nation’s challenges. The following pages are a look back at my work representing Nebraskans during the 113th Congress. It truly is a great honor and privilege to represent Nebraska values and advance our shared interests in Washington. Thank you for participating in the democratic process.

Deb Fischer

DEFENDING AMERICA

National defense is Congress' top constitutional duty. Throughout history, our men and women in uniform have secured our freedom and defended our way of life from those wishing to do us harm. As threats to our security evolve and become more sophisticated, it is important to ensure that our troops have the tools and training they need to safely fulfill their missions. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I take very seriously Congress' role to equip our forces to protect our freedom at home and our interests abroad.

Building the Future of Our Strategic Defense

Much of the tireless work to detect and deter threats to the homeland and our allies around the world is based right here in Nebraska at U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM). STRATCOM's missions include overseeing our nuclear forces, missile defense, cyber-security, and space programs. As a member of the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, which has jurisdiction over much of STRATCOM's missions, I have had the honor of working with those who are committed to maintaining our most important tools for defense.

Today we face more complex challenges from our adversaries than ever before. As technology continues to change the landscape of warfare, it is important that we are prepared to defend against 21st century threats. Construction of a new STRATCOM facility is underway to replace the current physical plant, which dates back to the 1950s. The new facility will include needed upgrades to IT infrastructure, which is essential to STRATCOM's work. These necessary changes also ensure we



have the capability to identify, prevent and, if necessary, engage threats well into the future. I am committed to securing the needed resources to see this project through and provide STRATCOM with state-of-the-art capabilities it requires to fulfill its important national mission.

Protecting Our Ultimate Safeguard

Our nuclear deterrent remains the ultimate safeguard for American security, as well as that of our allies. Unfortunately, investment in our nuclear capability and its infrastructure has diminished over the years. Our newest warheads were designed in the 1980s, and have not been tested since the 1990s. In October, I visited our nuclear weapons laboratories – Los Alamos, Sandia and Lawrence Livermore – and discussed the importance of modernizing our entire nuclear enterprise with the scientists charged with maintaining these weapons. I believe

we must follow through with our modernization commitments and I will continue to work with my colleagues to secure the investment necessary to ensure the viability of our nuclear stockpile.

I also strongly oppose the president's stated goals of dramatically reducing our nuclear arsenal. Current events make clear that the world is not getting safer or more stable. This year, Russia annexed Ukrainian territory; it was also revealed that Russia built new nuclear weapons specifically banned by the 1987 Intermediate-range



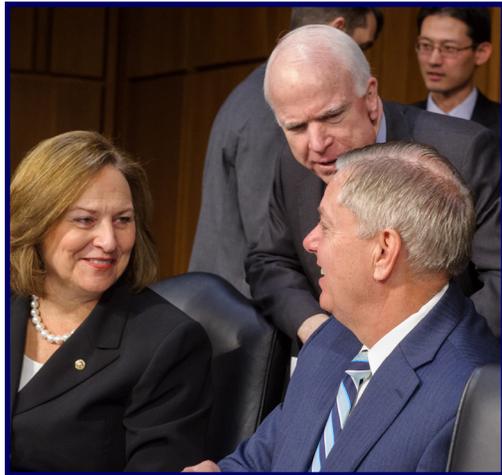
Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Russia is not alone in this regard. I expressed my strong concern regarding this treaty violation in an August *Omaha World-Herald* opinion piece. A number of nations are investing in and upgrading their nuclear arsenals. Clearly, now is not the time for further U.S. reductions.

I am pleased to report that three amendments I offered related to our nuclear deterrent were incorporated into the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2014 (NDAA). These amendments ensure our inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) remain ready, if needed, and promote greater transparency with regard to the administration's plans to reduce our nuclear arsenal under the terms of the New Start Treaty.

Countering Emerging Threats

The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, an increasingly belligerent Russia, the spread of terrorist groups throughout Africa, and growing regional ambitions of China underscore our need to be prepared to defend U.S. interests at home and abroad. This not only requires strong leadership in Washington, but also improved capabilities to combat new threats.

I am honored to serve as the Ranking Member of the



Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. This subcommittee has oversight over a variety of issues, including Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and our special operations

warriors, counter-narcotics and counter-proliferation programs, counter-terrorism policy, and much of the Department of Defense's basic research programs. In this role I have worked with the subcommittee's current chairman, Senator Kay Hagan (D-NC) to provide legislative support to help our military operations.

Last year, we proposed legislation to authorize and oversee the Department of Defense's effort to neutralize Syria's chemical weapons. This legislation was incorporated into the final version of the NDAA, which provides funding guidelines for our military. In May of this year, I visited the men and women performing this vital mission and toured *MV Cape Ray* – the vessel used to neutralize those dangerous weapons. I also participated in a quiet ceremony at the Pentagon recognizing the Department of Defense's role in the international mission to destroy

Syria's chemical weapons. I am grateful for their commitment to this important mission.

Confronting Sexual Assault in the Military

The sexual assault crisis in our military is unacceptable. This is not a gender issue; it is a violence issue. According to Pentagon studies, more than half of all victims are men.

From attending a White House summit to questioning top commanders at a landmark sexual assault hearing, I have worked with my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to address this scourge. I am pleased to report that the product of this work is a meaningful legislative change that will make a difference.

I joined Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) in offering an amendment to the FY 2014 NDAA that directly bolsters the rights of victims impacted by crimes. Other legislative efforts focus on changing the military's culture or the chain of command. Our amendment empowers victims of sexual assault by ensuring they are aware of their basic rights to be informed, present, and heard at critical stages throughout their ordeal. This is the least the system owes to those it failed to protect.

I also worked with Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) to secure passage of an amendment requiring a higher standard for those appointed to all Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) offices. These SAPR officers are the very individuals charged with ensuring our men and women in uniform are safe from predators in their own ranks. News reports make clear the military is in desperate need of higher caliber individuals in these critical positions.

Both measures were adopted by the Armed Services Committee and included in the final FY 2014 NDAA signed into law.

On March 10, 2014, the Senate unanimously passed the *Victims Protection Act*, legislation I offered with Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) to combat military sexual assault, bolster victims' rights, and boost accountability for offenders. The legislation



was incorporated into the Senate's FY 2015 NDAA.

PROMOTING INNOVATION

Nebraskans are no strangers to blazing new trails. Nebraska's early settlers dared to move beyond the status quo — the established land and way of doing things — to explore a new and untamed territory.

Generations later, that same pioneer spirit is alive and well in Nebraska. Businesses here continue to blaze new trails in the tech sector, pushing the limits of innovation to find solutions to everyday problems. These ideas not only improve lives, but they also create jobs and grow the economy, especially in rural areas. Innovations in e-commerce, distance learning and telemedicine continue to revolutionize our day-to-day lives and create more opportunities for prosperity right here at home. Nebraska's business-friendly environment serves as a magnet for small developers and large companies alike.

Unfortunately, the status quo continues to paralyze Washington. Outdated federal policies and stale federal regulations have not kept pace with the rapid development of technology -- not only in Nebraska, but across the nation. The next round of cutting-edge technology is just around the corner, and the government needs to be prepared to embrace it.

America's future potential for growth, innovation, and opportunity largely depends on the policy frameworks that we adopt.

As a member of the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee, I have developed several pro-innovation proposals to help put American consumers and creators ahead. Below are a few examples of my work in the 113th Congress to address policy challenges to growth and innovation.

[Incentivize Economic Growth and American Innovation](#)

If we do not strive to identify and promote future growth industries, investment and opportunity could go overseas or to sectors that hold less promise. The mobile health and applications market is one such growth area — it is expected to exceed \$26 billion by 2017. The U.S. mobile apps economy is responsible for nearly half a million new American jobs. Despite this compelling data, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is holding back tech wearables, apps, electronic health records, and scheduling software.

Low-risk health IT deserves a modern regulatory regime — one that promotes innovation, supports job growth, and protects patient safety. That is why I introduced the *Preventing Regulatory Overreach to Enhance Care Technology (PROTECT) Act*. This bipartisan legislation codifies the common-sense idea that new technologies should not be tied up with old red tape.

If a mobile app can be developed that can keep people out of the hospital, improve lives, or lower costs, we should get government out of the way and spread the knowledge. Until Congress clarifies the FDA's oversight role, we will continue to live in a world where health IT is governed by rules written before the advent of the VCR.

Expand Access to Communication Services

Nebraskans depend on faster broadband Internet and reliable telephone service for business, education, news, and other critical purposes. Improving local access to the broadband economy is a high priority of mine.

We need to give businesses every opportunity to be successful and grow good jobs. Unfortunately, that is hard to do when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) sends businesses the wrong signals, meddles in local affairs, and fails to prioritize the best improvements to telecom networks in rural America.

For example, the FCC continues to pursue federal actions that override laws in nearly 20 states, including Nebraska laws, governing how or whether municipalities can deliver Internet services. While Washington has an important role to play in helping connect people, it should not micromanage the commercial broadband marketplace. When it comes to investment in the broadband Internet market, I have fought to protect Nebraska taxpayers and to keep the federal government out of our state's right to govern as it sees best.

I have also worked to:

- Eliminate onerous fees that make it cost-prohibitive to bring the Internet to people.
- Make rural call completion a higher priority at the FCC so consumers and businesses can get quality and reliable telephone service.
- Modernize our universal service rules so that providers have more of an incentive to bring broadband Internet service to consumers.

- Allow citizens to see the free local broadcast channels of their choice. Since almost a third of Nebraska's counties receive out-of-state broadcast channels, I introduced the *Let Our Communities Access Local (LOCAL) TV Act*. This bipartisan bill would bring us closer to ensuring that all communities could receive relevant and local information from broadcast outlets. Similar language was wrapped into a broader telecommunications bill, which passed Congress in November.

Embrace Technology and Modernize Outdated Rules

Technology changes rapidly, but our government often misunderstands how best to respond. To empower creators and consumers, we need to modernize obsolete policies that are not useful or that unfairly block innovation.

I introduced the *Helping Innovation and Reviving Entrepreneurship (HIRE) Act* to address this concern. The HIRE Act promotes opportunities for innovators and individuals by requiring that the FCC approve new technology applications within a year. Improving government's responsiveness to technology applications and license requests helps everyone.

I also introduced the *Enhancing Labeling, Accessing, and Branding of Electronic Licenses (E-LABEL) Act*, which unanimously passed Congress and has been signed into law. This new law modernizes federal labeling requirements for electronic devices, such as phones, computers, and tablets, lowering device costs for consumers, making regulatory information more accessible, and expanding options for manufacturers.





Many of our veterans return from service with both the visible and unseen scars of war. Some face new physical challenges sustained on the battlefield while others bring with them the memories of the horrors of war that will never be forgotten. That is why it is so important that a grateful nation welcomes home our veterans with open arms, and that we uphold our pledge to care for those who have “borne the battle.”

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established for just that reason. Unfortunately, failures by the VA have raised questions about our commitment as a nation to caring for our troops. This cannot be the way we thank our veterans for their service.

To help reform the VA, I voted for the *Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014*. This bill improves healthcare access for our veterans, addresses administrative challenges at the VA, and establishes greater accountability for bad actors within the agency. I also drafted legislation (S.2362) that would ban bonuses at the VA for poor performance. We should not reward failure and mistreatment of our nation’s heroes. More must be done and I will continue to closely monitor the VA’s progress in implementing these needed reforms and improving its services for our veterans.

But we cannot stop there. We must also ensure that our veterans have opportunities to be successful in their careers once they return. That is why I am co-sponsoring the *Hire More Heroes Act*, which promotes hiring veterans in businesses that would otherwise not expand to avoid costly government mandates. This legislation helps businesses grow while providing greater opportunity for our veterans.

[Veterans History Project](#)

My state staff is helping preserve Nebraska’s proud history of military service through the Veterans History Project. The Veterans History Project, an ongoing initiative of the Library of Congress, collects first-hand accounts of U.S. veterans and the civilians who supported them during wartime. The project collects recorded interviews of stories, memoirs, journals, photographs, letters, and military documents, which are then made available to the public. My office recently worked with two Lincoln soldiers to record their histories. One soldier served three tours in Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan and the other served in Vietnam as a military intelligence officer. If you know a veteran who would like to participate and tell his or her story, please contact my office.



At any one time my state staff has nearly 100 open individual cases involving VA issues. Two staff members are devoted to helping veterans, one-on-one, resolve their personal issues. Recently, a frustrated veteran unable to locate his appeal in the VA system contacted my state office. He was not getting answers using the VA call center. In a short time, my staff not only located his appeal, but also encouraged the VA to finish it. The VA realized its mistake and awarded the veteran \$40,000 in retroactive disability compensation. If you or a veteran you know is having problems, please contact my office directly: 402-441-4600.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY



Nebraskans are all too familiar with stories of wasteful government spending. At a time when our country faces serious fiscal challenges and an \$18 trillion national debt, these fiscal blunders are

more than foolish – they are dangerously irresponsible. Examples of government waste underscore the critical importance of proper congressional oversight of federal agencies and their funding. I am working hard to rein in our government’s bad spending habits. That starts by increasing transparency and accountability, as well as eliminating waste and duplication. I believe it is Congress’ duty and responsibility to conduct its oversight role to the fullest. The American people demand accountability and deserve nothing less.

Balancing the Budget

The future of our country, its prosperity, and even its national security depends on Washington getting its fiscal house in order. Establishing a budget that respects taxpayer dollars is a necessary first step to restoring trust and accountability in government.

That is why I cosponsored the *Balanced Budget Amendment* to the U.S. Constitution. If ratified, the amount we spend could not exceed the revenue we take in, and spending would be capped at 18% of gross domestic product (GDP). The president would also be required to submit a balanced federal budget proposal to Congress. Nebraska balances its budget, which contributes to fiscal stability in our state. It is time for Washington to do the same.

Keeping Washington Honest

Washington has not been honest about the true cost of its programs. Currently, the federal government underestimates the costs of federal credit programs. It does not account for market risk or the costs associated with individuals defaulting on federally backed loans, such as mortgages or student loans. The Congressional Budget Office has been issuing warnings for years about the inaccuracy of its accounting programs, which are required under current law. These congressionally required budget gimmicks hide the true costs of government spending and total hundreds of billions of dollars. Failing to include the cost of default on federally-backed loans, which

is increasingly likely during weak economic periods, is dishonest to taxpayers who must foot the bill. Including these costs on the government books is known as “fair-value” accounting, a real world accounting method commonly used by private sector investors.

In an effort to rein in spending, I introduced the *Budget and Accounting Transparency Act*. This bill increases honesty in government accounting practices by requiring the full costs of federal credit programs to be included in both annual budgets and cost estimates for future legislation.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

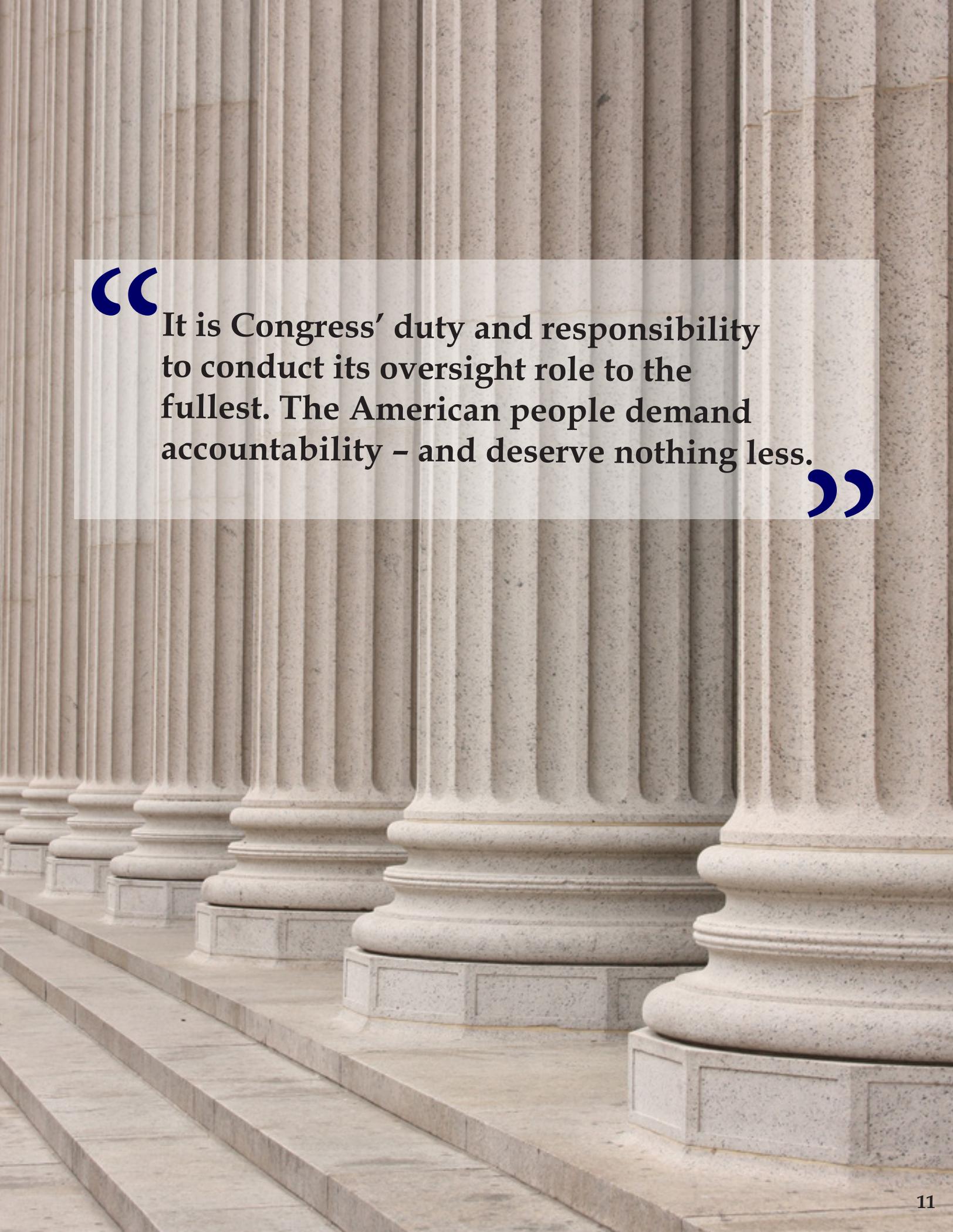
Another over-regulator is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Created by Dodd-Frank, it was given unprecedented regulatory power over almost every facet of our economy, including mortgages, foreclosure procedures, and even auto loans. The agency has virtually no accountability to the American people because elected lawmakers have limited ability to restrain its actions.

A single director nominated by the president holds most of the power. I believe decisions governing such a powerful agency should reflect input from all sides, rather than placing broad regulatory authority in the hands of a single unelected official with little oversight from Congress. Similarly, the approval process for regulations issued by the CFPB requires changes to strengthen oversight.

With this in mind, I introduced legislative solutions to install checks on this bureau’s power, and to enhance its transparency and accountability to the public. *The Consumer Financial Protection Commission Act* would replace the agency’s single director position with a five-member, bipartisan commission. *The CFPB Improvement Act* would change the requirement for the Financial Stability Oversight Council’s voting members to overturn CFPB regulations, giving stronger oversight to the Council.

Ending Rewards for Bad Behavior

Like many Nebraskans, I was deeply troubled to learn that despite being cited for misconduct in 2010, 2011, and 2012, many IRS employees still received bonuses. This is a breach of public trust. I sent a letter to IRS Commissioner Koskinen requesting that IRS employees who fail to file or pay taxes be immediately dismissed, not rewarded. The letter also demanded answers for mismanagement and wrongful bonuses. Additionally, I cosponsored the *Stop Wasteful Federal Bonuses Act*, which would limit the ability of federal agencies to award bonuses to employees who are not in good standing with their agency or the law.

A row of classical stone columns with a quote overlay. The columns are light-colored and have a fluted design. The quote is centered in a white box with a semi-transparent background. The quote is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The quote is enclosed in large, blue, stylized quotation marks. The background is a close-up, low-angle shot of the columns, creating a sense of depth and grandeur.

“

It is Congress' duty and responsibility to conduct its oversight role to the fullest. The American people demand accountability - and deserve nothing less.

”

CUTTING RED TAPE

Regulations can be important for protecting the public welfare, but they must be based on sound science and balanced with economic demands. It is important that regulatory policies are grounded in common sense and subject to a thorough cost-benefit analysis. It is also critical that rulemaking is conducted in an open and transparent process where all stakeholders' views are considered.



Improving the Regulatory Process

I have been deeply engaged in efforts to restore accountability and oversight for federal agencies that have unleashed an onslaught of new regulations.

Federal agencies should only adopt regulations if the benefits justify the costs. I cosponsored the *Regulatory Responsibility for our Economy Act*, which tailors regulations to accomplish their goals while imposing the least burden on society; it also allows for public participation.

Another piece of legislation I cosponsored was the *Regulations from the Executive In Need of Scrutiny (REINS) Act*, which requires any rule or regulation with an economic impact of \$100 million or more to come before Congress for an up-or-down vote before taking effect. This makes sure Nebraskans have a say on costly new Washington red tape.

The Obama Administration has increasingly used "guidance documents" to expand agencies' regulatory reach, avoiding the established vetting process. I cosponsored the *Closing Regulatory Loopholes Act*, which grants Congress increased oversight over actions taken through this loophole.

Stopping Regulatory Overreach

When I visit with lenders, bankers, and job creators responsible for economic growth across the state, I hear the common concern with Washington's heavy-handed overregulation.

Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and I worked to shepherd legislation to eliminate an outdated paperwork mandate that unnecessarily burdened auto dealers. Our measure (H.R. 724), which was signed into law, ended the requirement that auto dealers provide purchasers with a certificate stating the vehicle meets Clean Air Act (CAA) emission requirements. This paperwork was pointless, as all new vehicles already must comply with CAA before entering commerce.

Fighting for Affordable Energy

As Nebraskans, we are fortunate to enjoy some of the lowest electricity rates in the country, receiving approximately two-thirds of our power from coal-fired generation. New proposals from EPA mandating carbon dioxide emission reductions threaten our state's continued energy prosperity. I have raised concerns regarding these proposed rules with EPA, speaking directly with the EPA Administrator about potential impacts.

During the nomination process for EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, I worked with my Republican colleagues on the Senate Environmental Public Works Committee to extract some important commitments regarding the EPA's rulemaking process. We focused on making public the underlying scientific data upon which Clean Air Act rules are promulgated, fixing economic analysis deficiencies, enhancing transparency measures, and improving the agency's protocols related to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. These reforms are an important part of

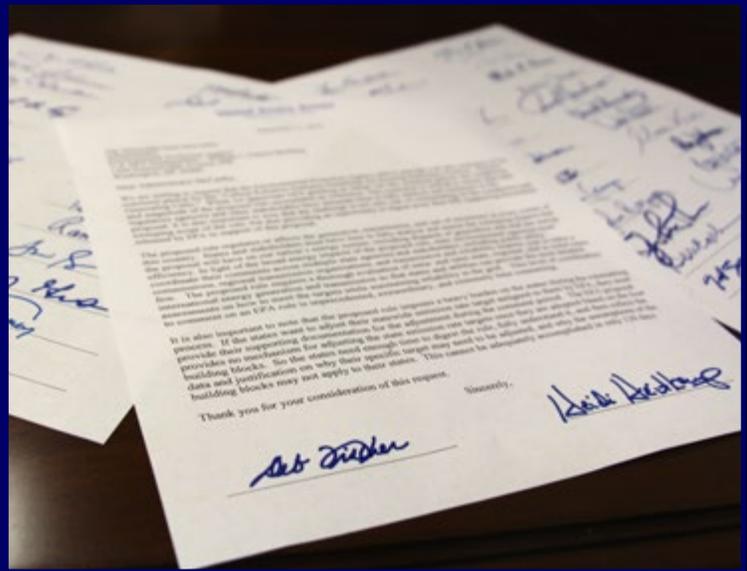


environmental policies that impact America's energy future.

I have also worked to defend a fair regulatory environment for nuclear energy. Nebraskans receive about a quarter of our electricity from nuclear power, and we are fortunate to have productive, environmentally sound uranium mining facilities in our state. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) plays an important role in ensuring the safe and successful management of these operations. Through the Senate EPW Committee's oversight of the NRC, I have pressed for the Commission to adhere to its principles of good regulation – independence, openness, efficiency, clarity, and reliability.

Massive Federal Overreach

I believe private landowners, farmers, ranchers, and local communities do a tremendous job taking care of the natural resources entrusted to them. That is why I'm fighting against misguided attempts to expand federal power, which would usurp local decision-making authority and undermine private property rights. Specifically, I have been leading the charge against the EPA's efforts to expand its control over "waters of the United States." Under the proposed rule, federal bureaucrats – not state and local authorities – could assert control over water resources. This means the federal government could regulate almost any body of water, from road ditches to farm ponds. Nebraskans own the surface and ground water within our state boundaries. This overreach by the federal



government is dramatic in scope and unprecedented in effect.

To push back against this overreach and preserve state and local control over our land and our water, I cosponsored the *Protecting Water and Property Rights Act of 2014* – a bill to stop the rule from taking effect. I have also raised my strong concerns directly with EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Ken Koposis, the president's nominee to head the EPA's water office.

In addition, I voiced concern regarding proposed federal land acquisitions and introduced amendments to the *Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2014* to strengthen local input in the federal land acquisition process.



HEALTH CARE



Federal policies have moved our health care system away from focusing on patients and their needs. Massive bureaucracies have invaded the doctor-patient relationship, imposing more regulations on health providers and higher cost burdens on families.

It is crucial to bring common sense and humanity back to the health care system. Policymakers need to reduce regulatory burdens, incentivize innovation, and ensure Americans can access the care they need.

Ensuring Equal Treatment

Millions of people have lost their private health insurance because of Obamacare and nearly 20,000 Nebraskans have contacted my office to express their concerns. Despite promises by the president that you could keep your current plan, continue to see your preferred doctor, and that health costs would shrink, the opposite has proven true for too many families across the nation.

By selectively enforcing Obamacare coverage mandates and ignoring others until it is politically convenient, the Administration is unfairly burdening millions of Americans. To stop the government from picking winners and losers, I introduced the *FAIR Act*, which delays the individual mandate anytime the employer mandate is delayed. My bill would level the playing field, freeing all Americans from Obamacare's individual mandate.

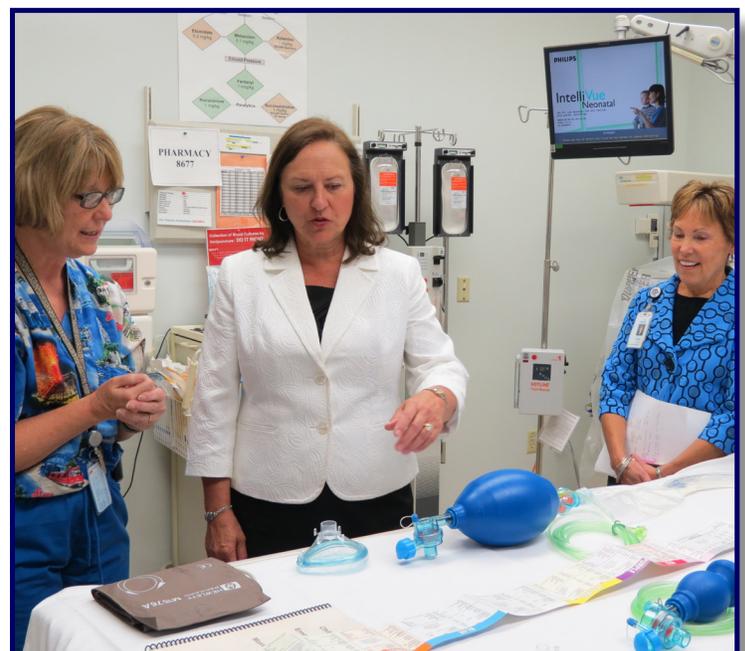
Slashing Regulatory Burdens on Health Care Providers

The federal government too often saddles doctors and hospitals with complex paperwork and unmanageable regulatory costs. Arbitrary regulations waste time and resources that could be spent providing quality care to patients.

I introduced the *Two-Midnight Rule Coordination and Improvement Act* to get rid of an arbitrary rule that mandates inpatient versus outpatient status based solely on the amount of time an individual spends in the hospital. It does not make sense that a patient who stays in the hospital 25 hours is considered an inpatient while another staying 47 hours could be considered an outpatient. One-size-fits-all medicine does not work.

Protecting Rural Health and Ensuring Access

Rural hospitals are vital to providing critical care and job opportunities for communities in Nebraska and across the country. Unfortunately, Obamacare's rules have created additional challenges in places where access to health services is already limited. These new Washington regulations do not address the unique concerns of rural Nebraskans.



I cosponsored several bills to ease challenges faced by rural providers. *The Protecting Access to Rural Therapy Services (PARTS) Act* would allow general supervision, rather than direct supervision, by a physician or nurse practitioner for many outpatient therapy services, providing flexibility in meeting rural patients' need for services.

The Critical Access Hospital Relief Act removes the Medicare condition of payment requiring critical access hospitals (CAHs) to certify that a patient will be discharged or transferred within 96 hours after admission. Some situations require longer monitoring, and doctors should not be forced to transfer patients from the comfort of their own community just so they can be reimbursed by Medicare.

Safeguarding Health Data Security

Because of Obamacare, millions of Americans are forced to disclose more of their personal information – including their Social Security numbers and health care information – to a federal website that has been nothing short of a disaster. Even before the website went live, staff at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the agency responsible for overseeing the rollout of the Obamacare website, recognized that it was not secure.

That's why I became an original cosponsor of the *Health Exchange Security and Transparency Act*. This bill would require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to disclose to individuals within two business days any breach of a system maintained by an insurance exchange that results in personal information being stolen or unlawfully accessed.

Increasing Family Control over Healthcare

Obamacare strengthened a federal panel – the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force – to decide which preventive services must be covered by private insurers. Their decisions also strongly influence which preventive services

will be covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

In 2009, the federal task force made the controversial recommendation that women between the ages of 40-49 did not need regular mammograms. In response to widespread



backlash, Congress included in Obamacare a provision negating the recommendation, leaving federal mammography coverage unchanged until the task force decides to make a new recommendation. This same federal task force has also recommended against regular prostate screenings.

I introduced the *Healthy Families Act*, which would require the Preventive Services Task Force to enhance transparency and accountability. Specifically, it increases public involvement, including from medical associations and physician experts, through open meetings and empowers families to have a greater say in their health care.

Obamacare also presents unique challenges for pregnant women. Because health premiums have risen for many families, Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are increasingly attractive options for those already utilizing high deductible health plans.

Unfortunately, women suffer disproportionate financial penalties if they choose to participate in HSAs as pregnancies typically cost more than the HSA cap set by Obamacare. The result is fewer affordable health plan options for women – particularly young women looking to start families.

Under the existing rules governing high deductible health plans, certain preventive care benefits can be offered with no deductible. I have offered the *Women's Health Act*, which allows insurance companies to provide high deductible health plans that pay for routine prenatal, pregnancy, and post-partum procedures without first meeting the plan's deductible. These proposals provide families with more health care options and more control over their own care.



TRANSPORTATION



Improving Infrastructure

I believe one of the top priorities of the federal government is to provide for the building and maintenance of modern infrastructure. In the Nebraska Legislature, I chaired the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee, where we worked together to increase investment in infrastructure without raising taxes. We made difficult decisions in order to prioritize existing revenue to boost funding for new roads. I am working with my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to ensure that federal infrastructure challenges can be met with the same sense of priority and fiscal responsibility that we have demonstrated in Nebraska.

As a member of the Senate Environment & Public Works (EPW) Committee, I was pleased to work in a bipartisan manner to advance the *Water Resources Development Act (WRDA)*, which establishes priorities for the Army Corps of Engineers to maintain navigable channels, reduce flood and storm damage, and restore aquatic ecosystems. I led the Nebraska Congressional delegation in advocating for provisions that were included in WRDA to advance stalled flood control projects, including levee improvements essential to protecting critical infrastructure in Nebraska. These projects protect the quality of over half of Nebraska's drinking water, the Army National Guard Camp at Ashland, and highly-traveled portions of Interstate 80 and State Highway 6.

I also worked to advance the EPW's bipartisan bill to reauthorize surface transportation programs, which included provisions I championed to empower states, streamline environmental reviews and accelerate project

delivery. These provisions were drafted in consultation with key transportation stakeholders in Nebraska, including officials from the Nebraska Department of Roads.

The first provision allows states to provide their own certification regarding the appropriate level of environmental review of certain projects, rather than wasting time waiting for the federal government to provide the assessments.

The second provision establishes procedures – based on a template developed by the Transportation Secretary – allowing states, in addition to the federal government, to determine which state or federal agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Historical Society, etc.) must be consulted prior to beginning an infrastructure project.

I will continue to push for policies that prioritize infrastructure development and reduce unnecessary regulations.

Nebraska's agricultural industry is central to the success of our state, contributing more than \$24 billion annually to our economy. According to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, for every dollar in Nebraska ag exports, \$1.29 in additional economic activity is generated throughout our state. Nebraska leads the nation in several areas of agriculture, from most cattle on feed to first in popcorn production. Finding the right federal policies that allow our farmers and ranchers to reach their full potential is critically important not only for our state's economy, but also for a hungry, growing global population. I worked with my colleagues in the 113th Congress to promote ag-friendly policies and eliminate needless regulations

The farm bill also included an amendment I offered to fix bureaucratic hurdles impacting farmers' access to seeds. The bipartisan amendment, cosponsored by Senator Carper (D-DE), ensures the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not treat biotech seeds as pesticides when shipments are imported.

Supporting Home-Grown Renewables

Our state has answered the call to invest in domestic renewable fuel production. Nebraska has 24 ethanol plants and an annual production capacity of 2.3 billion gallons. These plants represent more than \$5 billion in capital investment in the state and

Delivering Regulatory Relief

Unnecessary federal regulations have created many challenges for our producers, holding them back from reaching their full potential.

I am proud that my efforts in the 113th Congress helped to achieve a major regulatory relief victory for the agricultural community. Compliance with EPA's Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) rule for on-farm fuel storage has been among the top regulatory concerns for farmers and ranchers. I continually highlighted this issue in the Senate Environment & Public Works

that stifle opportunity for our farmers and ranchers.

2014 Farm Bill

This year, I was pleased to back a farm bill that supports Nebraska's thriving ag economy. This legislation was the result of a long, collaborative, bipartisan process. The 2014 farm bill reforms risk management and disaster assistance programs, promotes environmental stewardship, bolsters export opportunities, encourages rural development, advances research, and provides nutritional assistance to needy families.

provide direct employment for approximately 1,200 Nebraskans.

I was pleased to welcome Nebraska farmer Jon Holzfafter, who testified at a Senate Environment & Public Works Committee oversight hearing on domestic renewable fuels. He highlighted how, through careful stewardship and the adoption of innovative technologies, our farmers are able to produce an abundant supply of food, feed, and fuel in an environmentally-sustainable manner.

Committee and insisted that an SPCC fix be included in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Because of this persistence and the ability to work toward a bipartisan solution, SPCC relief passed the Senate and became law through the WRDA bill.

Many regulations impact a variety of industries. For more information on my work to roll back federal regulations, please see the section on Cutting Federal Red Tape.

UPHOLDING OUR VALUES

Pro-Life Issues

Throughout my time in public service, I have been committed to supporting commonsense, pro-life measures that offer compassion for women and unborn children in difficult circumstances.

Nebraska was the first state in the country to pass a 20 week abortion ban, which I supported as a state senator. That legislation passed by an overwhelming vote of 44 to 5. Pro-life and pro-choice senators came together and supported the bill because it is good policy.

As a U.S. senator, I cosponsored the *Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act*, a bill prohibiting abortions of pregnancies after 20 weeks – the point at which unborn children are capable of feeling pain according to scientific evidence. The American people support limits on late-term abortions, and I believe this reasonable measure should be adopted at the federal level.

Adoption

Adoption forever changes the lives of countless children in need of loving families. I admire the generous women and men who are willing to open their homes to children in need of a family, and I will continue to promote policies that support domestic and international adoption.

Unfortunately, many individuals utilizing federal family planning services do not receive adequate information about important opportunities for birth and adoptive parents. It is critical that those seeking these services are informed of all the adoption resources available to them.

To address this shortcoming, I introduced the *Adoption Information Act* to ensure that individuals utilizing federally-funded family planning service programs are made aware of these resources. Specifically, this legislation would require family planning service project or program grant recipients to provide each person served by the project or program a pamphlet containing a list of all the adoption centers in the state, along with their contact information.

Additionally, countless families face challenges when attempting to adopt internationally. Since last year, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has blocked

adoptions of Congolese children by families in other nations. Because of the DRC's recent actions, more than 450 U.S. families, including several in Nebraska, have not yet been united with their adopted children – even after completing the legal processes. The DRC simply will not allow the children to leave.

I have joined several bipartisan, bicameral efforts by members of Congress requesting our counterparts in the DRC reform their adoption policy and allow these children to be adopted by a caring family.

Second Amendment

I am a strong supporter of our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms, and I oppose attempts to restrict the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise their constitutional rights. In the United States



Senate, I have fought a number of legislative proposals that would curtail these rights. For example, I opposed gun control legislation that would have laid the groundwork for a national gun registry. In other countries, national registries have served as a precursor to widespread bans, which had little or no impact on violent crime.

Additionally, I supported federal legislation introduced by Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Ted Cruz (R-TX) that would increase funding for school security measures instead of infringing on Americans' constitutional rights. The Grassley-Cruz proposal would also fix problems with the existing National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Furthermore, I opposed the United States becoming a signatory to the United Nations Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The proposed ATT fails to recognize Americans' rights to keep and bear arms for self-defense, hunting, sporting, and other lawful activities.

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Adoption forever changes the lives of countless children in need of loving families. I admire the generous women and men who are willing to open their homes to children in need of a family, and I will continue to promote policies that support domestic and international adoption.

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IMMIGRATION

Protecting Our Border and Enforcing Immigration Laws

We are a compassionate, generous nation that has long welcomed immigrants through the legal process. While we are a nation of immigrants, we are also a nation of laws, and our laws must be enforced. Enhancing border security must be our first priority; border security is a matter of national security. We must also address our nation's legal immigration process and ensure that the system for legal entry is safe, secure, and efficient. I have taken several important actions in the U.S. Senate to protect our country and strengthen our immigration policy.

To improve border security, I introduced an amendment to implement a biometric entry-exit system at all points of entry so we can track who is coming into and leaving the country. Such a system was recommended by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, but never implemented. Having an effective biometric system is important because over 40 percent of our nation's illegal immigration problem is due to visa overstays. Likewise, I have supported the establishment of a mandatory employment verification system.

Our immigration policy will only be effective if it is enforced. I have challenged the president for his failure to enforce our immigration laws. In 2013, the Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) released 68,000 potentially deportable illegal immigrants deemed by ICE to pose a criminal threat. ICE has been directed to refrain from imprisoning those who are in the U.S. illegally unless a serious crime is committed. I have publicly expressed strong opposition to this proposal.



When our country experienced a surge in border crossing by unaccompanied minors, the federal government announced its intention to relocate minors into communities across the country. I cosponsored the *UAC State Notification Act* that would require the federal government to notify states when unaccompanied children (UACs) are placed with family members or sponsors within states.

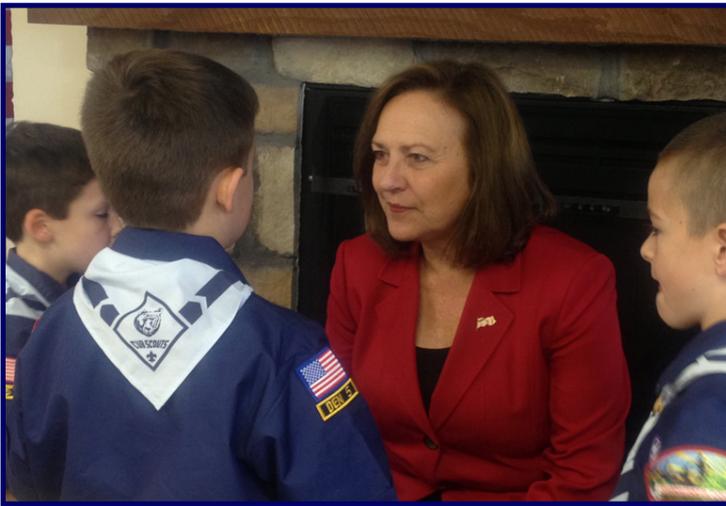
In August of 2014, I traveled to Texas with a bipartisan group of senators to see the border firsthand and assess the crisis. We first visited the McAllen Border Patrol Station, where we met with Customs and Border Patrol agents. This is the largest and busiest station in the Rio Grande Valley Sector, with over 3,200 border patrol agents responsible for 53 percent of all apprehensions nationwide. We also had the chance to visit a Health and Human Services facility where unaccompanied minors were held. Finally, we had the opportunity to spend time at the Hidalgo Bridge, which connects the United States and Mexico. This visit reinforced my perspective that our immigration system needs a serious overhaul and that we must promote policies that put security first.



EDUCATION

Nebraska is fortunate to have strong schools with wonderful educators who equip our students with the tools they need to succeed. Before I served in the Nebraska Legislature, I was a longtime school board member and served as president of the Nebraska Association of School Boards. These positions helped shape my views on education policy as a state lawmaker and now as a U.S. Senator. Nebraska, like every state, has unique strengths and challenges specific to its schools and students. Parents, teachers, school boards, and communities know best the needs of their students. That is why I believe education decisions are best made at the state and local level, not by Washington bureaucrats. We must ensure our public policy enhances the classroom experience and helps place students on the path for bright, successful futures.

Fighting Common Core



The awarding of federal education waivers and grants has favored Common Core states, which backhandedly encourages the adoption of these multi-state education standards. That is simply unfair. Nebraska should have a level playing field on which to compete for education grants and waivers without being compelled to adopt multi-state education standards like Common Core. I joined my colleagues in sending a letter to leading Senate appropriators against these unfair incentives. We argued in favor of restoring the states' primary role in determining our education curriculum. The federal government should promote policies that improve the ability of individual states to best meet the needs of specific communities.

Allocating for Children's Education (ACE) Act

I introduced the *Allocating for Children's Education (ACE) Act*, to address another concern for middle class families: rising education costs. All parents – whether your children are in public or private schools, or are homeschooled face steep costs related to purchasing school supplies or

covering extracurricular expenses. This is especially true for parents with special needs children.

A "Coverdell" education savings account is a savings plan available for families to use in order to pay for qualified education expenses. Currently, families can set aside up to \$2,000 in a Coverdell account. Taxes are not paid on savings as long as the funds are used for educational expenses.

Qualified elementary and secondary education expenses include:

- Tuition, fees, and academic tutoring;
- Special needs services;
- Books, supplies, and other equipment for students enrolled in qualifying public, private, religious school, or qualifying home school states; and
- Expenses for the purchase of any computer technology or equipment or Internet access and related services.

As a result, families who regularly contribute to Coverdell accounts can save thousands of dollars over the long-term. *The ACE Act* would increase the contribution limit to \$5,000, allowing parents to save more money so they can afford to provide children a high quality education.

Supporting Our Schools

I have continued to support our federally impacted schools in Nebraska. The Impact Aid program provides financial assistance to local school districts that are affected by federal activities. Such activities include the federal government's ownership of specific lands. I joined my colleagues in sending a letter to leading Senate appropriators requesting continued funding for the Impact Aid Program.



STRONG FAMILIES



Years of economic pain and stubborn uncertainty have taken their toll on middle class families. Too many continue to struggle. Worries over everyday affordability and long-term financial security persist in Nebraska and across the nation. Those Americans who have jobs are often underemployed, and forced to work two or three jobs just to make ends meet. Still, some families cannot get ahead.

Increased pressure on shrinking family budgets adds stress for parents of young children or those caring for elderly loved ones. While Washington remains paralyzed over how to pass big policy changes to jumpstart the economy, there are reasonable measures I believe we can all agree on to make life easier for working families.

I have introduced a number of proposals – my “Strong Families, Strong Communities” plan – to help all Americans have more flexibility at work, more take-home pay, and more options to meet family obligations.

Workplace Flexibility to Meet Family Needs

Different families have different needs. Most American families, though, struggle with balancing responsibilities at home with duties at work. The pressure of raising young children while caring for elderly parents is exacerbated by rigid work schedules. Not all parents enjoy flexible work arrangements, despite increasingly complex family demands. With more than half of women working as primary breadwinners, workplace flexibility has become a necessity for 21st century families.

The solutions for these families are not new, one-size-fits-all federal mandates. Instead, we should focus on a balanced, innovative approach that respects both family obligations and employers’ costs of doing business.

That is why I have offered a policy proposal that would enable working families to have continued access to pay while they are meeting necessary family obligations.

I introduced *The Strong Families Act*, which would create

a tax credit for employers to offer paid leave for all employees covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Senator Angus King (I-ME) is a lead cosponsor of my legislation.

To be eligible for the tax credit, the employer would, at a minimum, be required to offer 4 weeks of paid leave; they may offer more. Employees would be allowed to take FMLA leave after 90 days on the job. The paid leave would be available on an hourly basis and would be separate from the other vacation or sick leave. For each hour of paid leave provided, the employer would receive a 25 percent non-refundable tax credit; the more paid FMLA time the employer offers, the greater the tax credit.

Ensuring Equal Pay for Equal Work

Both the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 have dramatically increased career opportunities for women and helped ensure they receive equal pay for equal work – a principle I strongly support. Despite significant progress in schools and in the workplace, some women continue to struggle with gender-based pay discrimination, directly impacting their livelihood, financial future, and job security.

The prevailing concern among women with wage discrimination indicates there is more work to do. I led Senators Susan Collins (R-ME), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in offering a proposal to modernize key portions of the 51-year-old Equal Pay Act.

Our Workplace Advancement Plan:

- Protects employees by stopping employers from punishing or retaliating against employees for discussing their salaries with one another;
- Reinforces employers’ existing obligations to fully apprise employees of their rights regarding pay discrimination; and
- Addresses the opportunity gap by consolidating a number of duplicative programs and uses existing funding to create a grant program that would provide training to men and women in underrepresented sectors of the economy. The program would allow businesses to partner with state workforce agencies to train individuals to fill available jobs.

Our proposal to directly address discrimination in the workplace is a reasonable, fact-based approach. More government and more lawyers will not lead to more pay for women. Women want good jobs with more take-home pay; that means actual economic growth and more job opportunities.



INDIAN AFFAIRS

Native Americans are an important part of our state's rich cultural heritage. For thousands of years, several different tribes – descendants of the Plains Indians – inhabited the land that is now within our state boundaries. As a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, I have the opportunity to work on several unique issues facing the Native American community.

Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail Study



One of Nebraska's most famous Native Americans is Chief Standing Bear, a 19th century leader of the Ponca Tribe. Chief Standing Bear set upon a path to recognize the dignity inherent with his people, and established himself as a major figure in the American struggle for civil rights. To honor this

legacy, Senator Johanns and I introduced legislation to explore the possibility of creating a Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail. I also joined Senator Johanns in sending a letter to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Chairwoman Mary Landrieu (D- LA) and Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). The letter respectfully requests that they schedule a hearing on our bill and favorably report it for potential consideration by the full Senate.

Expanding Opportunity for Native American Children

I enjoyed working with Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) to address the challenges facing Native American children in Nebraska and across the country. I also cosponsored her legislation, the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children Act. This bill uses existing funding to create a national commission

on Native American children that would be tasked with conducting a comprehensive study of current federal, state, and local programs to support Native American children. Its goals are to more precisely and efficiently target limited resources, enhance knowledge growth capabilities, and expand private partnerships in Native communities.

Securing Greater Energy Independence for Tribes

Congress should pass policies that support energy and economic development. I cosponsored Senate Indian Affairs Ranking Member John Barrasso's (R-WY) bill, the *Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act*. It would strengthen existing laws related to energy development and add new provisions to assist Indian tribes with developing their energy resources to achieve greater energy independence. This bill would streamline the Department of Interior's process for approving "Tribal Energy Resource Agreements" (TERAs), which grants authority to an Indian tribe to review and approve leases, business agreements, and rights-of way for energy development on tribal lands.

Promoting Fair Tax Treatment

The IRS excludes government programs and services from being taxed through the General Welfare Doctrine. For example, a federal disaster relief payment made to a victim is not taxed. This policy originated in 1938, when the IRS ruled that Social Security payments were not gross income and thus, not taxable. Tribes, as sovereign nations, have provided similarly tax-exempt tribal government programs. However, the IRS has challenged the tax status of these tribal general welfare programs. A Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration report released in January 2013, showed the IRS targeted tribes through its Abuse Detection and Prevention Team.

To address this IRS overreach, I am cosponsoring bipartisan legislation, the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act. This bill would amend the tax code to exclude the value of an Indian general welfare benefit from gross income. Additionally, the bill would establish a Tribal Advisory Committee to advise the Treasury Secretary on Indian tax policy, as well as require training for IRS field agents on federal Indian law. Finally, the bill would require the Treasury Secretary to suspend all audits and examinations of Indian tribal governments and members of Indian tribes.

WORKING FOR YOU

As your U.S. Senator, staying in close touch with Nebraskans is one of my top priorities. Since I was sworn into office in January 2013, I have held over 280 listening sessions, meetings, and events with the public and various organizations all across Nebraska. The insights and suggestions I receive help guide my decisions as I explore opportunities to revise current federal policies or offer new legislation that directly addresses your concerns.

I also have a staff presence in Omaha, Lincoln, Norfolk, Kearney, and Scottsbluff. Members of my state staff represent me at meetings and events across the state when the

Senate is in session in Washington. They also lead a number of outreach efforts across the state.



Mobile Office Hours

Nebraska is a geographically large state. As a resident of Valentine for over four decades, I understand the limited access rural residents often have to governmental services. I believe it is important that every Nebraskan has an opportunity to visit with me or my staff face-to-face. To make this possible, my outreach representatives have held mobile office hours in each of Nebraska's 93 counties. These office hours are held in local public offices, such as a library or city administration building. They serve as a convenient way for constituents to voice their opinions or to get help with problems they are facing with the federal government. Upcoming office hours are available on my website.



Community Volunteering

My Nebraska staff is part of the community, and as such I feel it is important that we give back some of our time and talent. The staff has represented our office on monthly service projects volunteering at worthwhile organizations such as Salvation Army, Open Door Mission, Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank, Matt Talbot's Kitchen, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Heartland Hope Mission, and the People's City Mission.

Constituent Casework

Another way my office aims to serve Nebraskans is by providing assistance with federal agencies. My staff has a strong track record of helping constituents navigate a range of bureaucratic hurdles – from difficulty acquiring VA medical records to problems with Social Security, and trouble obtaining tax refunds owed by the IRS.

Unfortunately, difficulty dealing with federal agencies and programs is not uncommon, and my office stands ready to assist any Nebraskan with these exhausting and often time-consuming challenges. The ability to help constituents resolve these issues that impact their livelihoods is one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. I am proud of the work my office has done to help Nebraskans get the services they need.



Success Stories- Individuals*

John submitted a payment to the IRS for tax year 2012. This check was an overpayment, and he was due a refund; however, the IRS misapplied the payment to an account of a deceased individual. After my office got involved, a refund check from the 2012 overpayment was mailed to John for the amount of \$857.97.

Jesse contacted my office seeking assistance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in repairing bank erosion on his property on the Missouri River. After my office contacted the Corps on Jesse's behalf, the Corps inspected the area and it was identified for repair.

A mother needed help to ensure her son suffering from a life-threatening disease received vital prescriptions. Her son's insurance policy was dropped by his Medicare Advantage carrier because of changes resulting from Obamacare. The carrier allowed her son to apply for another policy and verbally confirmed that he was covered. However, when they attempted to retrieve his prescriptions they were told there was no record of his coverage under the new policy. After several calls to the carrier, the concerned and rightly frustrated parent spoke to my staff requesting assistance. My office worked with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to look into the miscommunication and confirmed the son's coverage. The mother wrote me to say, "In frustration I called your Omaha office. My son would die without his meds....Within a day [my son] was contacted by Medicare, his insurance carrier, and soon had his prescriptions."

*Note: Alternate names were used to preserve the privacy of constituents.

Success Stories- Communities

My staff participated in a series of meetings with some of our regional airports regarding problems the airports are experiencing due to the Federal Aviation Administration's new safety regulations and increased pilot qualifications requirements. The state staff worked with my Washington staff on these concerns. Based on this information, I agreed to cosponsor Senator Enzi's Small Airport Regulation Relief Act.

Beginning in May 2013 - after hearing from nearly 300 Nebraskans - I led the Nebraska Congressional Delegation in delivering both formal and informal communications to the U.S. Department of Interior Secretary, Sally Jewell, echoing the concerns of Nebraskans about the Ponca Bluffs and Niobrara River land management plans being considered by the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The proposal under review would likely result in the government management or acquisition of more than 1.4 million acres in Nebraska and South Dakota. To address this overreach, I sent a letter with Senator Johanns to question Interior Secretary Jewell about potential federal land acquisitions in Nebraska.

One of our communities requested assistance with the Federal Highway Administration's Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), to secure \$500,000 in grant funding for a trail system. After a change in leadership within the FLAP program, the community was informed that the grant would require a 19.82 percent local match and that the match would have to be in cash or receipts for purchased material and that labor and services would not be included. When they initially applied for the grant they were told they could include labor and services. My office contacted the new area director of FLAP and was able to coordinate a meeting between the agency and all parties involved with the grant, and the agency agreed to accept the community's original local match.

A Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employee toured one of our county courthouses to provide the county with ideas on how to improve security. The county was supposed to receive a report from DHS shortly after the tour but still had not after six months and countless calls and emails. My office made a congressional inquiry on their behalf and they received a response from DHS that day.



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