

Working for you

114th Congress | First Session
2015



Get Trucker



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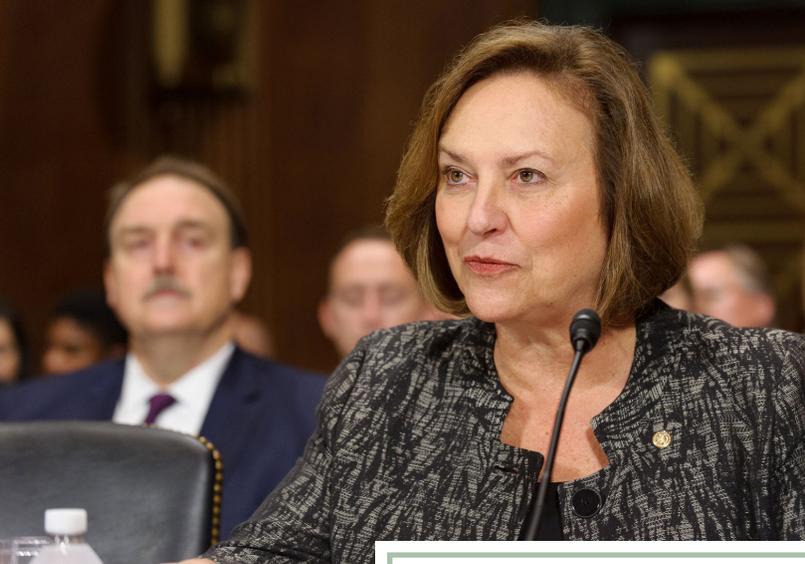
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A note from Deb

As 2015 comes to a close, I am proud to look back on a successful year in the U.S. Senate, and I am optimistic for what the future holds. In the first session of the 114th Congress, we ushered in a new majority that is more efficient, more productive, and more accountable to the American people. Over the past year, more than 100 bipartisan bills have passed the Senate, and we have restored deliberation and debate. All senators, no matter their party, have had the opportunity to make their voices heard. It's refreshing to focus on making progress.

I have continued to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to advance the priorities of Nebraska families and our nation. But our work has just begun. With your continued feedback, we can provide Nebraskans with the accountability and results they deserve. Thank you for your interest and continued participation in the democratic process.



working
FOR NEBRASKA

As your voice in the U.S. Senate, I am committed to ensuring the federal government is working for Nebraska. Your voice guides my work and remains my most important source of information.

I will continue to work hard and serve the people of our great state. Here is a look at some of my efforts on behalf of Nebraska over the past year.



Resilience and Renewal: The severe storms that struck Nebraska in May 2015 caused extensive damage to public infrastructure across our state. Bridges were destroyed, rail lines incurred extensive damages, and homes were flooded. The Nebraska Management Agency's preliminary estimate of the expenses resulting from this devastation exceeds \$13.8 million.

To assist Nebraska families affected by these storms, I led the Nebraska congressional delegation in a letter to President Obama. In it, we expressed our support for a major disaster declaration request. Following our letter, the president issued a disaster declaration in Nebraska. This triggered the release of federal funds to help our state and local governments, as well as certain nonprofit organizations, with their recovery efforts.

A New Federal Judge for Nebraska: Last year, then-Senator Mike Johanns and I launched a statewide search after learning of a vacancy resulting from the retirement of Judge Joseph F. Bataillon. Approximately 20 individuals asked to be considered for this position, and we had each of them fill out the Judiciary Committee's in-depth questionnaire. After careful review, Senator Johanns and I decided to interview half a dozen finalists. Then, after weeks of thorough consideration, we agreed to recommend Bob Rossiter to President Obama for this judgeship. I am pleased the process Senator Johanns and I initially led together has resulted in the nomination of such a fine Nebraskan.

In the summer, President Obama nominated Omaha's Bob Rossiter to serve as a federal judge for the District of Nebraska. I had the privilege of calling Bob to inform him of this wonderful news, and I was

honored to testify on his behalf at a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee in September. The committee approved his nomination in October, setting the stage for a vote on the Senate floor.

Throughout his long legal career, Bob has demonstrated the highest integrity, legal skill, professionalism, and dedication to the rule of law. I am thankful for Bob's willingness to enter public service.

Commemorating 100 Years of Boys Town: Nebraska is proud to be the home to Boys Town. For nearly 100 years, this extraordinary organization has been improving the lives of young people in vulnerable situations.

Earlier this year, I introduced a bill to authorize the minting of commemorative coins in honor of Boys Town's 100th anniversary. In the Senate, I spread the message of Boys Town by sharing what this remarkable organization has done for countless families across the country.

It didn't take long before we received major bipartisan support, collecting 73 cosponsors for this legislation. On July 6, 2015, this bill was signed into law. During a visit to Boys Town this summer, I was honored to present a copy of the law to the current director, Father Steven Boes.

Protecting Power in the Panhandle: Families and businesses in Nebraska rely on affordable electricity in their daily lives. At the federal level, I am working to ensure that we have responsible policies that keep rates low.

Unfortunately, the neighboring Colowyo Mine was threatened this year with unnecessary closure due to a federal court ruling. The mine is a principal source of coal for

Tri-State's power plant in Craig, Colorado, which provides energy to much of Nebraska's Panhandle. Without reliable and affordable coal resources from the Colowyo Mine, electricity costs would skyrocket for Nebraskans. For that reason, I joined Senators Cory Gardner of Colorado, John Barrasso of Wyoming, and Mike Enzi of Wyoming in a letter to Interior Secretary Sally Jewell. In it, we called on Secretary Jewell to take immediate action to protect the Colowyo Mine.

After receiving our letter, the Department of the Interior completed its draft environmental assessment and announced that the Colowyo Mine could continue operating. The department's decision is a victory for Nebraskans in the Panhandle who depend on this mine for their energy needs.

“President Barack Obama ought to take the advice from Sen. Deb Fischer to present a ‘clear and comprehensive strategy’ to combat the Islamic State.”

- Editorial, *Lincoln Journal Star*, 12/1/15

DEFENDING AMERICA

The first duty of the federal government is to defend our nation.

I am honored to serve Nebraska on the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC). In this role, I’ve been humbled to work with the men and women of our military to ensure they have the tools they need to successfully complete their missions and safely return home.

This Congress, I have the privilege of serving as chairman of the Armed Services Emerging Threats and Capabilities (ETC) Subcommittee. As the head of this subcommittee, I held hearings on the Department of Defense’s (DOD) cybersecurity efforts and our nation’s counterterrorism policy. I also held a classified subcommittee briefing on Iran’s network for supporting terrorist groups in the Middle East.





PROVIDING FOR THE COMMON DEFENSE

Every year, the Senate Armed Services Committee authorizes needed funding for our national defense and sets policy priorities for the U.S. military in an annual bill, known as the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This year, I was pleased to see our committee produce bipartisan legislation that will help ensure our military is prepared for the threats facing our nation. As the dangers throughout our world evolved over the past year, our committee targeted areas that required additional support, while also making cuts to outdated and inefficient programs.

In my capacity as chairman of the ETC Subcommittee, I worked to include language in the fiscal year (FY) 2016 NDAA that supports the needs of our Special Operations forces, increases our military's cyber capabilities, decreases its cyber vulnerabilities, and promotes the next generation of technology to ensure our military's advantage on and off the battlefield.

I was proud to support this year's NDAA, and I will continue to ensure the brave men and women of our armed services have the resources they need to protect the United States.

BOLSTERING OUR STRATEGIC FORCES

The men and women at U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) in Nebraska are responsible for countering strategic threats around the globe. This year's NDAA supports STRATCOM's operations and the modernization of our nuclear deterrent. It also authorizes the \$21 million request by the Air Force for a new dormitory at Offutt Air Force Base in the Omaha area.

THE BAD IRAN DEAL

Over the course of many months, hundreds of Nebraskans contacted me to express their opposition to the president's nuclear deal with Iran. I agreed with them and opposed the deal.

President Obama's deal neither advances nor protects America's interests.

Put simply, this deal will not stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. All meaningful restrictions on Iran's nuclear program will expire in 15 years. At that point, Iran's nuclear program will be legitimized, and it will be free to build an industrial-scale enrichment program. This means the "one-year breakout" time the administration has used to defend this deal is only temporary.

I'm worried about the significant rewards Iran will reap as part of this deal. Iran will receive access to tens of billions of dollars that were frozen as a result of sanctions. With sanctions repealed, trade will resume and Iran's economy will grow. This influx of cash means the Iranian regime will have more money to fund terrorist proxies all over the world.

Finally, the American delegation's last-minute decision to lift the U.N. embargos on the sale of conventional weapons and ballistic missile technology to Iran is a victory for Tehran. Our top military advisors have repeatedly warned against relaxing these restrictions under any circumstances. Because of the Obama administration's concessions, we have fewer tools to limit Iran's military development and prevent them from building a missile capable of reaching the United States.

As your U.S. Senator, my most important duty is protecting our country from these threats. In the days, weeks, and years to come, I will continue working to ensure this remains our top priority.

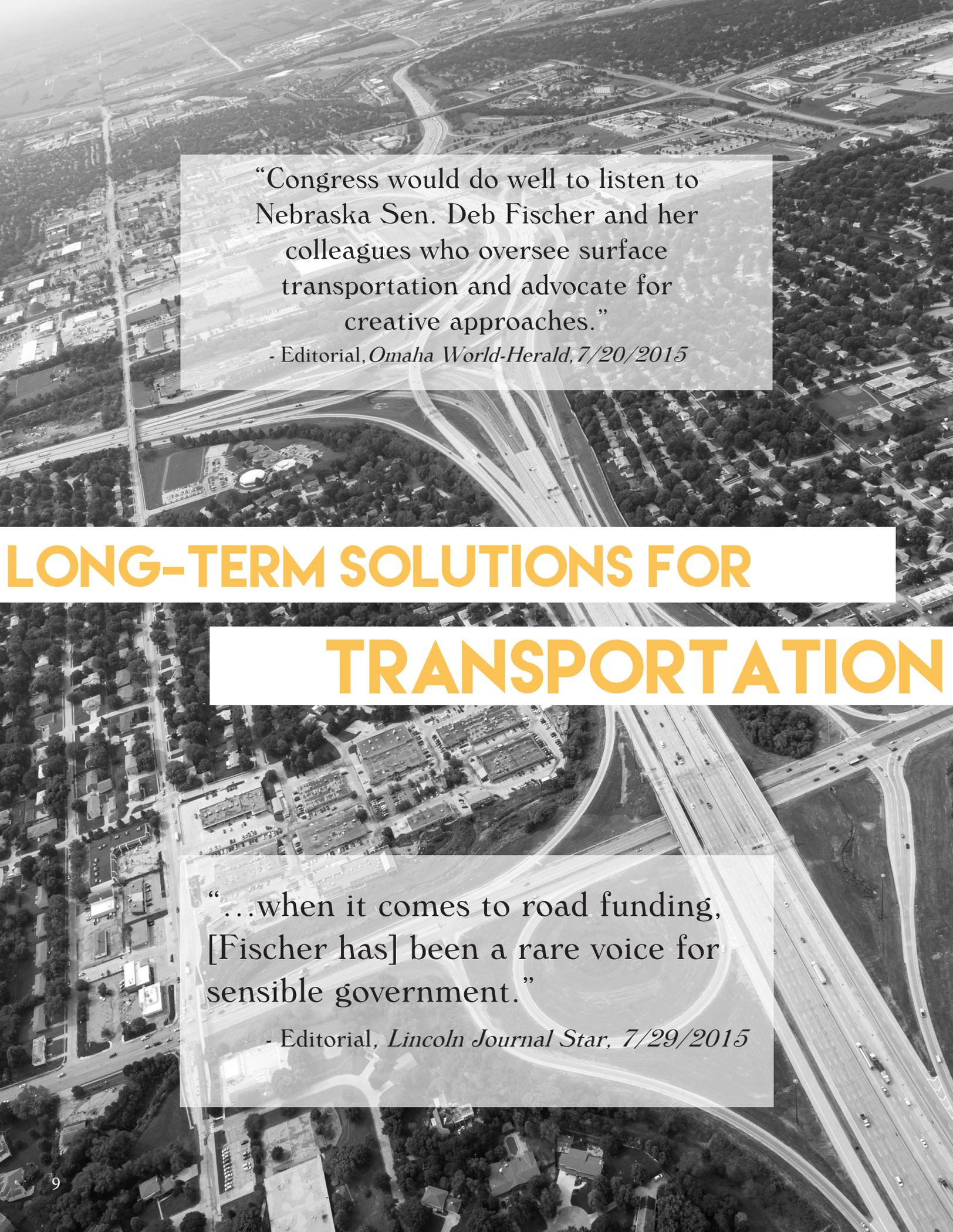
HOLDING OUR COMMANDER IN CHIEF ACCOUNTABLE

Four or five American-trained rebels. That's all we had to show for America's campaign to degrade and destroy ISIL in Syria as of September 2015. This stunning revelation came in response to a question I asked at a hearing about military operations to counter ISIL. Instead of reassuring senators that America's mission was on the right path, the testimony provided by General Lloyd Austin III cast further doubt on our strategy in the region.

Following this hearing, the administration was forced to acknowledge the program had failed. While it was somewhat encouraging to see the administration, at long last, admit to the facts on the ground, it remains clear we have lost valuable time and resources. Moreover, with the halt to the training program, which was the linchpin of the president's approach to addressing the crisis in Syria, it is entirely unclear how he intends to accomplish his goals.

The president has the responsibility to develop and execute a strategy that will actually achieve his stated goal of degrading and destroying ISIL. I remain ready to provide the needed oversight for any plan moving forward.





“Congress would do well to listen to Nebraska Sen. Deb Fischer and her colleagues who oversee surface transportation and advocate for creative approaches.”

- Editorial, *Omaha World-Herald*, 7/20/2015

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS FOR

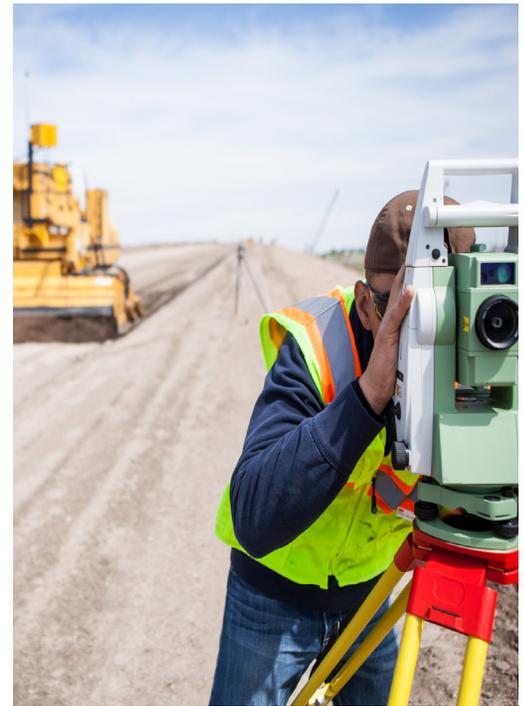
TRANSPORTATION

“...when it comes to road funding, [Fischer has] been a rare voice for sensible government.”

- Editorial, *Lincoln Journal Star*, 7/29/2015

**NEBRASKA ENCOMPASSES
VAST SWATHS OF
BEAUTIFUL, OPEN
COUNTRY AND VIBRANT
URBAN AREAS. ROADS
ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF
OUR STATE. THEY ENABLE
NEBRASKANS TO BRING
GOODS TO MARKET AND
DELIVER OUR PRODUCTS
AROUND THE GLOBE
EVERY DAY.**

CHAIRING THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE



In the Senate, I serve as the chairman of the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security. This subcommittee of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee is charged with protecting the safety of the traveling public and ensuring the reliability and efficiency of America's transportation network. The committee is also focused on conducting vigorous oversight over the federal agencies associated with rail, ports, maritime shipping, and commercial trucking.

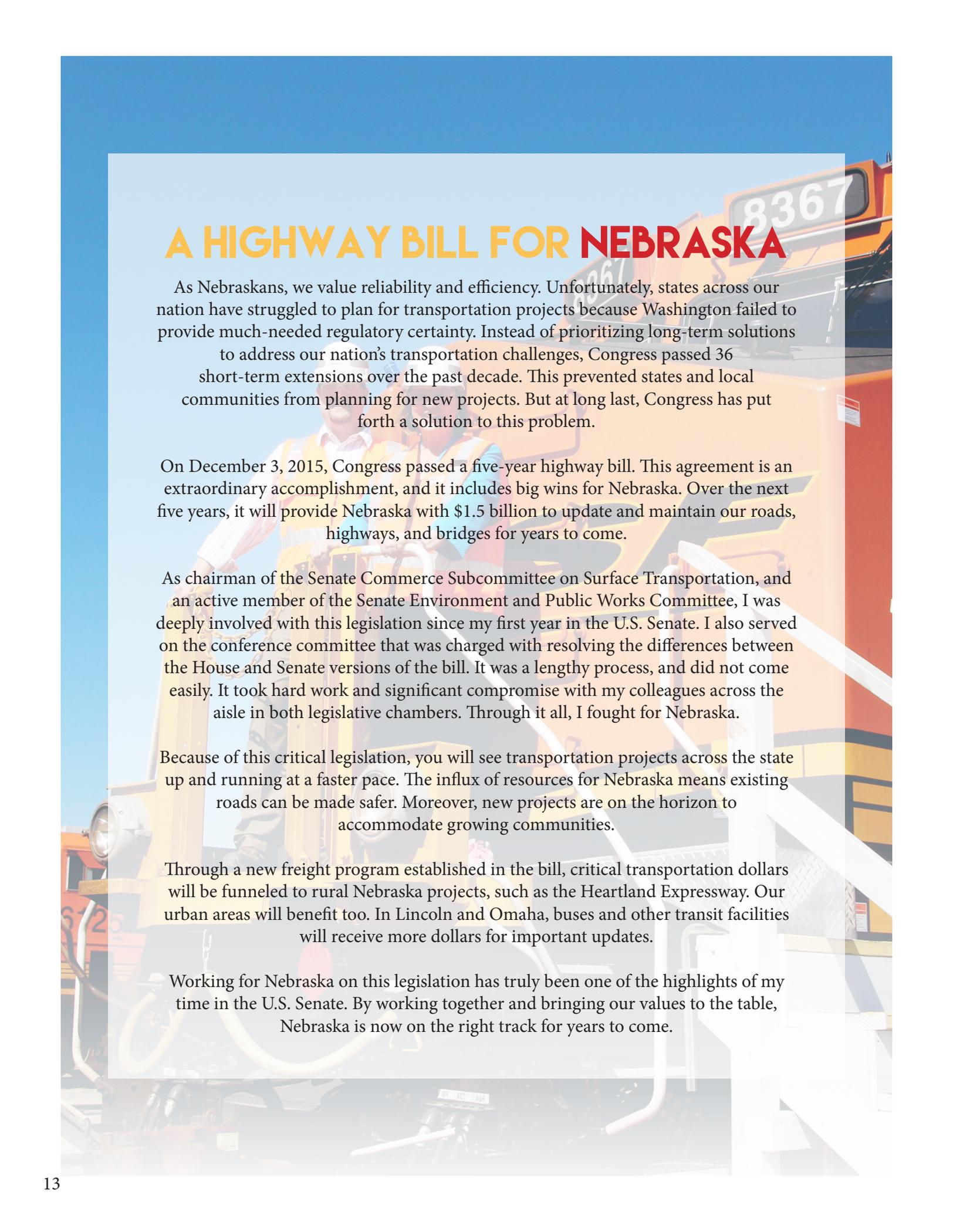
This year, my subcommittee led seven Senate hearings and two field hearings – one in Montana and another in New Jersey. In addition to this rigorous hearing schedule, our committee worked on major legislation to reauthorize the Department of Transportation's maritime activities, passenger and freight rail proposals, highway safety programs, and pipeline safety oversight.

I am also an active member of the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure. This subcommittee holds important jurisdiction over the Federal Highway Administration, the key agency in charge of federal highway project permitting and funding.



HOSTING U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY IN LINCOLN

Transportation fuels Nebraska's economy. To support our economy, we need to ensure our infrastructure is up to date. For that reason, I was glad to welcome U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx to Lincoln this summer. Together, we held a roundtable discussion with Nebraska's transportation stakeholders. We also toured the Diverging Diamond Interchange highway construction project west of Lincoln. Secretary Foxx's visit was a great opportunity to demonstrate shared commitment to long-term infrastructure policy and funding.



A HIGHWAY BILL FOR NEBRASKA

As Nebraskans, we value reliability and efficiency. Unfortunately, states across our nation have struggled to plan for transportation projects because Washington failed to provide much-needed regulatory certainty. Instead of prioritizing long-term solutions to address our nation's transportation challenges, Congress passed 36 short-term extensions over the past decade. This prevented states and local communities from planning for new projects. But at long last, Congress has put forth a solution to this problem.

On December 3, 2015, Congress passed a five-year highway bill. This agreement is an extraordinary accomplishment, and it includes big wins for Nebraska. Over the next five years, it will provide Nebraska with \$1.5 billion to update and maintain our roads, highways, and bridges for years to come.

As chairman of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, and an active member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, I was deeply involved with this legislation since my first year in the U.S. Senate. I also served on the conference committee that was charged with resolving the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. It was a lengthy process, and did not come easily. It took hard work and significant compromise with my colleagues across the aisle in both legislative chambers. Through it all, I fought for Nebraska.

Because of this critical legislation, you will see transportation projects across the state up and running at a faster pace. The influx of resources for Nebraska means existing roads can be made safer. Moreover, new projects are on the horizon to accommodate growing communities.

Through a new freight program established in the bill, critical transportation dollars will be funneled to rural Nebraska projects, such as the Heartland Expressway. Our urban areas will benefit too. In Lincoln and Omaha, buses and other transit facilities will receive more dollars for important updates.

Working for Nebraska on this legislation has truly been one of the highlights of my time in the U.S. Senate. By working together and bringing our values to the table, Nebraska is now on the right track for years to come.

A NEW APPROACH TO FUNDING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

While I served in the Nebraska Legislature, I spearheaded legislation to help local communities in Nebraska gain more control over the highway construction process. My bill, which was later signed into law, tasked Nebraska's Department of Roads with creating the Federal Funds Exchange Program (FFEP). In exchange for voluntarily giving up a portion of their federal transportation dollars, Nebraska counties and towns can now receive funds with more reasonable regulatory requirements.

Because of the FFEP, transportation projects, like the longstanding bridge replacement in Buffalo County and a major arterial street in South Sioux City, are up and running. Projects like these enhance the safety of local communities, strengthen the reliability of Nebraska's transportation system, and create good paying jobs for Nebraskans.

Across the country, Americans need safer roads. That is why I introduced the Build USA Act in May. This legislation would establish an exchange program at the federal level modeled after the Nebraska Department of Roads' exchange I established in our state. The purpose of this bill is to speed up critically important infrastructure projects so that states can save time and money as they strive to update roads, bridges, and highways.

Through innovative approaches like the Build USA Act, I'm bringing some of Nebraska's best practices to Washington.





Fighting EPA Overreach

Federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continue to roll out costly regulations that jeopardize the economic security and livelihood of Nebraska families. At every turn, I have fought to limit this damage and provide sensible alternatives as a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee.



Keeping the American Dream Within Reach

In 2014, the EPA and the Army Corp of Engineers announced a proposal to expand the definition of “waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act. Through this rule, commonly referred to as WOTUS, the federal government would be empowered to regulate almost any body of water. This includes prairie potholes, farm ditches, and everything in between.

Since this proposal was announced, I have been a vocal opponent. In March, I brought the EPW Committee to Lincoln for a field hearing on the proposed rule. We heard from a variety of local stakeholders about the specific effects it would have on our economy and Nebraska families. One witness from the Nebraska State Homebuilders Association testified that current regulations account for 25 percent of the cost of building a home. This rule will only increase those costs and put the American dream of owning a home out of reach for countless people in Nebraska and across the country. A Douglas County commissioner noted that taxpayers will bear the increase in costs for highway maintenance and construction because of WOTUS regulations.

I joined my colleagues to introduce legislation that would stop the WOTUS rule altogether. The first bill, known as the Federal Water Quality Protection Act, would require the Obama administration to consult states and stakeholders before imposing federal regulations on our state-owned water resources. I also introduced the Defending Rivers from Overreaching Policies Act. This bill targets the flawed science used by the EPA to expand the definition of navigable water.

Nebraska owns the water in our state. We strive to protect it every day. Our local communities, business leaders, natural resource managers, farmers, and ranchers have proven their ability to be good stewards of those natural resources. The citizens of Nebraska, not bureaucrats in Washington, are best suited to safeguard our state’s water.

Protecting Families from Higher Electric Bills

On August 3, President Obama finalized another EPA regulation. This rule, known as the Clean Power Plan, attempts to reduce our state’s carbon emissions by 40 percent through punishing mandates. For Nebraska, this rule is even worse than initially expected. In fact, we are one of the “top ten biggest losers” under the administration’s final rule because the reduction goals for Nebraska are 50 percent more stringent than those outlined in the proposed rule. Make no mistake, this is a carbon tax on families.

Nebraska has the distinction of being the nation’s only 100 percent public power state. As “owner-operators,” we are on the hook twice. First to retrofit the plants, and then as ratepayers. Because of this, our citizens understand the dangers posed by overregulating our electricity system. This is why President Obama’s rule is so alarming. In effect, it will create reliability and affordability concerns by shutting down many of the existing coal-fired power plants that produce two-thirds of our state’s electricity.

To fight this, I joined Senator Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia to introduce the Affordable Reliable Energy Now Act. This bill would halt the damaging effects of the rule by requiring the EPA to demonstrate the viability of its proposal. It would require the EPA to study the rule’s effects at a minimum of six separate power facilities before implementing new mandates.

Put simply, our legislation would force the EPA to prove the economic benefits of its rule. The bill would also hold the EPA accountable for the harm it inflicts on Nebraskans and families across the nation.





Photo Credit: Dr. Richard Yates

“We all want clean air & clean water. I will continue to hold the administration accountable & ensure the citizens of Nebraska, not the bureaucrats in Washington, remain in control of our precious resources.”

Senator Deb Fischer

PROMOTING INNOVATION

Entrepreneurs are creating new technologies and changing how we manage our daily lives. When thinking of start-ups, we imagine trendy complexes in Silicon Valley or stylish suites in New York City. But the truth is, these companies are thriving right here in Nebraska.

ION



HARNESSING CONSUMER OPPORTUNITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Industries like agriculture and transportation are using new technologies and interconnected devices to increase efficiency and drive growth. This phenomenon is often referred to as the “Internet of Things.” From Fitbits that track our activity to refrigerators that tell us when we need to pick up more milk at the store, opportunities abound to integrate the physical world with new wireless technology.

As a world leader in technology, the United States needs to capitalize on the economic potential created by these innovations. I led a bipartisan coalition of senators to pass a Senate resolution that commits our nation to a strategy for the Internet of Things. It incentivizes the use of new technologies and seeks to maximize consumer opportunity and economic growth. This resolution, which passed the Senate in March, is an important first step toward promoting new ideas and innovations for years to come. I am pleased to be a leader for new technology in the Senate.



MODERNIZING OUTDATED REGULATIONS

To remain competitive in the digital era, we must stop regulating a wireless world with VCR-era rules.

With that in mind, I introduced bipartisan legislation, known as the E-Warranty Act, to modernize warranty requirements and allow manufacturers to save paper and printing costs by posting their warranties online. Prior to this proposal, Federal Trade Commission rules were unclear. The option to post warranty information online provides relief to manufacturers and sellers, boosts consumer access to warranty information, and promotes responsible environmental stewardship by reducing waste.

The bill unanimously passed the Senate in July and was signed into law by the president this fall. This bipartisan effort brings common-sense solutions to outdated rules. It builds on another bill I had signed into law in 2014, the E-Label Act. This bill was introduced with a simple goal: ease regulatory requirements for technology products. By giving manufacturers the option to label products like phones and computers digitally, the law is increasing options and lowering costs. It is also making the required regulatory information more easily accessible to consumers.

The world is changing. Our technology is getting smaller, faster, and more efficient. Our laws must follow suit.





BUILDING THE BROADBAND OF TOMORROW

Twenty-first century connections are allowing businesses to compete and communicate in unique and exciting new ways. We are fortunate to live in an age where the small-town architect can send designs anywhere, the forward-looking farmer can watch the commodity markets and plan out the season, and the rural business owner can execute an idea to create jobs without leaving home.

But in order to reap these benefits, we need to make sure our businesses and communities have access to high-tech tools. This means ensuring the private sector has both the incentive and the ability to build across the American landscape. In that spirit, I was proud to showcase the impressive work we are accomplishing in Nebraska when I welcomed Federal Communications Commission Commissioner Ajit Pai to Omaha this year.

Commissioner Pai and I led a roundtable discussion with several Nebraska telecommunications companies. They noted that the building blocks of Internet networks are high-cost projects, ones that often require years of extensive planning and government approval. The message from these stakeholders was clear: it's time to streamline the permitting process and encourage a framework that

will reduce regulatory uncertainty.

We also met with Nebraska broadcasters and discussed many issues regarding their service. The broadcasting industry provides Nebraskans with access to critical news, weather, and information close to home. These Nebraska broadcasters presented a simple message: minimize the regulatory impact and modernize obsolete rules so consumers can continue to rely on the local broadcasting that benefits Nebraska communities.

Our tour of Omaha ended at Union Pacific's Harriman Dispatch Center. This state-of-the-art facility serves as Union Pacific's communication and traffic control center for trains across nearly 36,000 miles of track nationwide. It was exciting to see the innovative and highly technical work being done to move America's goods safely and efficiently.

Building the broadband networks of tomorrow requires common-sense reform today. Through cooperation and sound policies, we can make Internet access and broadband deployment a national priority.

HOLDING THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE

It's my duty to ensure that the hard-earned taxpayer dollars of Nebraskans are being used responsibly. I am a founding member of the Whistleblower Protection Caucus, where I continue to look for opportunities to help create a more open, honest, and effective federal government. Over the past year, I joined several of my colleagues to introduce legislation that targets waste and abuse. Many of these initiatives were launched on a bipartisan basis, which shows there are ways to find common ground and say enough is enough.



STOPPING WASTEFUL FEDERAL BONUSES

Waste is prevalent in our federal government. We must continue to rein in government spending, while also scrutinizing current government programs that are rife with fraud and abuse.

In 2014, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration reported that between 2010 and 2012, \$2.8 million was paid in bonuses to 2,800 employees with conduct violations. Certain federal agencies, including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), don't consider conduct problems, including tax compliance, when determining these bonuses. The report also found that over 1,100 IRS employees who had not paid their taxes received over \$1 million in bonuses.

To stop this, I joined Senators Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire and Claire McCaskill of Missouri to introduce the Stop Wasteful Federal Bonuses Act. This bill would prohibit bonus pay to federal employees who have violated agency rules. In June, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved this bipartisan legislation. The bill will now advance to the floor of the Senate.

Federal employees who broke the law should not receive bonuses at the expense of hardworking American taxpayers. By taking meaningful steps to stop these outrageous practices, we can ensure your taxpayer dollars are being used more effectively.

TAKING AN AX TO REAMS OF RED TAPE

Unfortunately, the federal government has become notorious for instituting unfunded mandates, and American taxpayers have been stuck footing the bill. In 1995, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) was enacted to curb unfunded mandates imposed on state and local governments and the private sector. However, since the UMRA's enactment, the law has fallen short. In fact, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has identified 14 different loopholes that allow government agencies to avoid conducting the required UMRA analysis of these mandates. In other words, red tape has survived and prospered.

By their very nature, federal mandates are both complex and vague. Like many Nebraskans, I believe that the federal government should be held responsible for the rules it puts in place. To that end, I joined Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma to introduce the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act in January. This bill would allow judges to temporarily halt the implementation of a regulation or invalidate a rule if a federal agency fails to complete the required analysis. Through this legislation, we can better hold the federal government accountable by informing citizens about the economic effect of costly regulations.

PUSHING FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY

Washington is in desperate need of greater transparency. Few people know that the Treasury Department administers a special source of funding called the Judgment Fund to finance certain court judgments and settlements against the federal government. In the past two years alone, the federal government has paid more than \$12 billion in Judgment Fund awards. This fund is allowed to allocate unlimited funds, with little oversight, to cover government liability in lawsuits. What's more, it is not subject to the annual appropriations process.

To cast some light on this, Senator Cory Gardner of Colorado joined me last February to introduce legislation, known as the Judgment Transparency Act, which would require a public accounting of the taxpayer funds paid to litigants who bring successful claims against the federal government. Specifically, the bill would require the Treasury Department to post on a publicly-accessible website the claimant, counsel, agency, fact summary, and payment amount for each claim from the Judgment Fund.

The Judgment Fund Transparency Act would provide hardworking taxpayers with the ability to see exactly how their tax dollars are being spent on these litigation expenses. Earlier this year, the *Washington Examiner* praised this bill, saying it “deserves broad bipartisan support. For anyone who believes in government transparency, it’s a no-brainer.”

GOVERNMENT SPENDING ON NOTHING

Perhaps most ridiculous is government spending on nothing at all. The federal government spends more than \$500 billion annually on federal grants. Shockingly, thousands of dollars are used each year to maintain expired grant accounts. The GAO found that users of the Payment Management System, which is the grant management system that the Department of Health and Human Services administers, were charged about \$173,000 per month to maintain over 28,000 expired grant accounts with a balance of \$0.

This year, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia joined me to reintroduce a bill, known as the Grants Oversight and New Efficiency (GONE) Act, to stop this wasteful practice. The GONE Act would require agencies to close out these expired grant accounts and identify exactly why they were never closed in the first place. In June, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved this bipartisan legislation. The Senate unanimously passed the bill in December.

American taxpayers deserve to know how their money is being spent. Bipartisan solutions are possible. By working together, we have found new areas to improve our government and protect American taxpayers.

Agriculture

Feeding the World



Future

Nebraska leads the way as a top producer and exporter of agriculture and manufacturing products. In 2013 alone, our state exported \$7.3 billion in products tied to the agriculture and processing industries. One in every four jobs in Nebraska is tied to agriculture. This is a testament to the fact that this industry is the economic engine of our state.

Fighting Inaccurate Guidelines

Earlier this year, a federal committee responsible for developing national nutrition policy guidelines released a new report that could affect our state's agriculture industry, specifically the livestock sector. As part of its guidelines, the committee insisted that Americans should eat less red meat and consume more fruits and vegetables.

Given the far reaching economic effect of this proposed change, I was alarmed to see that the committee's recommendations were based on environmental concerns, not on sound science. Our agricultural producers, and the millions of Americans they feed, could be harmed for generations by inaccurate and unfounded reports like this.

That's why I sent a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with 29 of my colleagues objecting to these guidelines. I am pleased to report that in response to our letter, the administration extended the comment period to make sure stakeholders have enough time to review and provide feedback on the report. Furthermore, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and HHS Secretary Sylvia Burwell announced that the 2015 Dietary Guidelines will now keep lean red meat.

Helping the Northport Irrigation District

Since 1952, producers near Bridgeport have been stymied under an outdated construction contract loan with the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR). This contract has subjected producers in the irrigation district to burdensome reporting and certification requirements. As a result, their ability to expand farms and businesses is limited. I have heard from families across western Nebraska who have lost time and resources because of this outdated requirement.

I introduced a bill that would allow landowners to repay their portion of the remaining construction cost debt associated with the original BoR contract loan. This proposal would relieve

them from land-use limitations and other restrictions. Farmers would have the ability to expand land access, reallocate the water they already use, and thereby increase their output.

This year, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to examine several Bureau of Reclamation bills, including my Northport Irrigation proposal. While I am not a member of this committee, I was pleased to see them examine this legislation.

I was also pleased to work jointly with Congressman Adrian Smith in this effort. His companion bill passed the House unanimously on June 1.

Restoring Fairness and Reducing Burdens

The highway bill included important provisions that benefit Nebraska ag producers. The bill reverses \$3 billion in cuts to the crop insurance program included in the two-year budget agreement in October. Another provision in the bill reduces the regulatory burdens on our producers by allowing them to transport up to 1,000 gallons of diesel fuel freely.

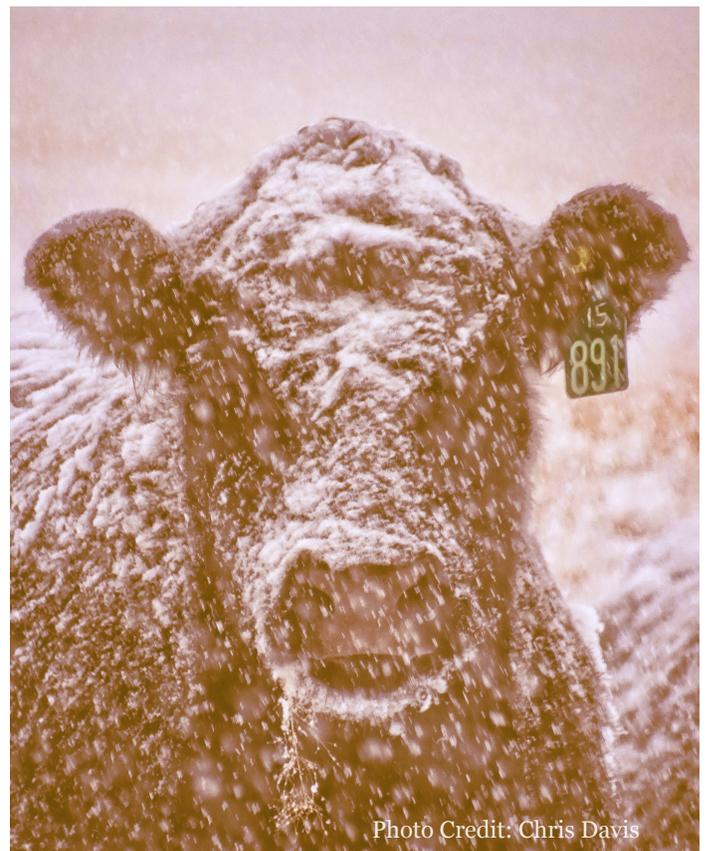


Photo Credit: Chris Davis



Protecting Nebraskans from Duplicative Pesticide Rules

Pesticide applicators in Nebraska are being forced to deal with redundant federal regulations. The EPA already regulates pesticide applications through strict instructions on product labels. The additional permitting requirements provide no environmental or water quality benefits, yet obtaining them costs farmers and their families more than \$50 million a year.

To alleviate this burden, I joined over a dozen of my Senate colleagues to introduce the bipartisan Sensible Environmental Protection Act, which targets the duplicative requirements associated with pesticide permits.

With this bipartisan legislation, we can provide relief to countless Nebraska farmers, outdoor enthusiasts, and their families.

EDUCATION

Providing an excellent education for our children is a critical investment in our future. Before my time in the Nebraska Legislature, I was active with K-12 and higher education. I served on my local school board, on the Nebraska School Finance Review Committee, as president of the Nebraska Association of School Boards, and as a commissioner on the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education. These experiences informed my work as a state lawmaker, and I continue to draw upon the knowledge I gained from those interactions.





Cardinals

PURRFECT

CRETE
ELEMENTARY

CRETE
CARDINALS
ELEMENTARY

Local Solutions and Brighter Futures

In December, Congress passed a major education reform bill, known as the Every Student Succeeds Act. The president signed the bill into law on December 10, 2015. This legislation is the result of a bipartisan compromise that resolves the differences between the education bills that were passed separately by the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Every Student Succeeds Act will largely scale back federal involvement in K-12. It will eliminate waivers, stop the Common Core mandate, and eliminate the federal test-based accountability system.

For years, requirements resulting from the No Child Left Behind law have caused over-testing and forced educators to “teach to the test” rather than provide students with the knowledge and tools they need.

The Every Student Succeeds Act gives states the ability to determine how to use federally required tests for accountability purposes.

The education bill also includes a local governance amendment that I offered earlier this year to the Senate education bill with Senators Angus King of Maine and Jon Tester of Montana. Our proposal prevents the federal government from coercing local school districts into adopting education requirements. It also ensures that local stakeholders have a stronger voice in both the regulatory and guidance processes.

I worked with Nebraskans on the bipartisan amendment and on the Senate version of the bill. As the Senate bill moved through the legislative process, I reached out to the Nebraska Association of School Boards, the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association, the Nebraska Association of School Administrators, the Nebraska Department of Education, the Nebraska State Board of Education, and

the Greater Nebraska Schools Association. All of these groups endorsed the bill, which passed the Senate in July.

With the Every Student Succeeds Act, we are replacing “one-size-fits-all” bureaucracy with real reforms. We are restoring local control to schools, parents, school boards, teachers, and communities so they can determine the best policies for their students and ensure future generations will have the skills they need to succeed.

Helping Families with Education Costs

As our economy struggles to grow, families in Nebraska and across the country find it increasingly difficult to save. That’s why I reintroduced a bill in January to increase the contribution limits for Coverdell Education Savings Accounts.

The bill, known as the Allocating for Children’s Education Act, would increase the annual contribution limit for Coverdell Education Savings Accounts from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per beneficiary. This increase would enable parents to save more money for their children’s education.

Currently, families can set aside savings in these accounts to pay for certain expenses, such as education-related technology, tuition, or tutoring. When funds in these accounts are used for qualified educational expenses, they are exempt from taxes. As a result, those who regularly contribute to these accounts can save thousands of dollars to address the costs of education.

Safeguarding Impact Aid for Bellevue Public Schools

The Omaha metro area is home to many federal employees, including U.S. military personnel stationed at Offutt Air Force Base and STRATCOM. Tax relief has historically been provided to school districts who educate these children, enabling the districts to cover the costs of educating these additional students.

Specifically, the impact aid program provides financial assistance to local school districts, including Bellevue Public Schools, that are affected by federal activities. Such activities include federal ownership of certain lands such as military bases or Indian land. Since 1950, Congress has provided this compensation to school districts that have lost tax revenue. The program currently provides local tax relief to over 1,300 school districts across the nation. Without this federal support, schools across the country could be forced to close.

In March, I joined a bipartisan group of senators in urging the Senate Appropriations Committee to support strong and continued funding for the impact aid program for FY 2016.

FAMILY-FOCUSED HEALTH CARE



ObamaCare continues to cause uncertainty across Nebraska and our nation. As time goes on, we see more and more evidence that this law has failed too many Nebraskans. The consequences are both painful and real.



ALTERNATIVES TO OBAMACARE

For years, we have witnessed the devastating effects of this unworkable law. More than 18,000 Nebraskans have contacted my office to express their concerns with higher costs and fewer choices. The frustration continued to escalate over the past year as the sign-up period began this fall. Millions of Americans are finding their plans are now more expensive and they are paying more due to ever-increasing deductibles. Rather than seeing the doctors they like at costs they can afford, these Nebraskans have been left with fewer options and more uncertainty. That's not what we were promised.

In December, the U.S. Senate took action. I joined 51 of my colleagues in voting to repeal ObamaCare. This is

something I have advocated for since running for this office. I am committed to promoting policies that will reduce costs and improve care. For now, we must focus on ways to scrap this law and replace it with a system that improves patient-centered care. I will continue to make this my priority for Nebraska families and the millions of Americans who are still struggling to find affordable access to quality health care.

But well before the passage of ObamaCare, America's health care system faced serious challenges. Solving these problems requires common-sense reforms. That's why I support policies to strengthen and improve our nation's health care system without adding additional mandates:

- Repealing the individual and employer mandate
- Repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board
- Returning the definition of full-time employment to 40 hours
- Returning regulatory control over health insurance to the states
- Allowing the purchase of health insurance across state lines
- Enacting medical malpractice reform
- Maintaining protections for individuals with pre-existing conditions



RESTORING THE 40-HOUR WORK WEEK

ObamaCare's employer mandate requires businesses with 50 or more employees to provide health insurance to full-time employees. But when it came to implementing this mandate, the Obama administration redefined full-time employees as individuals who work 30 hours or more per week. As a result, businesses have reduced employee hours and cut back on expanding to avoid triggering the law's costly requirements.

To help alleviate this damage to American workers and their families, I joined Senators Susan Collins of Maine and Joe Donnelly of Indiana to cosponsor the Forty Hours is Full Time Act. This bill would restore the traditional definition of a "full-time employee" to an individual who works at least 40 hours under ObamaCare.

The Forty Hours is Full Time Act would reinstate lost hours and wages for workers and their families. It would also reduce the law's financial hardships on businesses, thereby allowing for greater growth and job creation.

DEMANDING ANSWERS ON COOPORTUNITY

Among the thousands of pages within ObamaCare is a provision that created a new type of private, nonprofit insurer, known as a consumer operated and oriented plan (co-op). The administration offered low-interest loans to these co-ops to establish and maintain health care plans.

Thousands of Nebraskans enrolled in CoOpportunity Health, which is the co-op that offered health plans on the Iowa and Nebraska insurance exchanges. Citing CoOpportunity Health's high enrollment rates, the Obama administration touted this co-op as a success story. However, this is what ultimately contributed to the downfall of a deeply-flawed model.

More customers meant more insurance claims. With enrollment far exceeding the original targets, the company outgrew its capital resources. Despite initial claims of CoOpportunity's success, the administration declined to provide any additional funding for the co-op to continue operating. Because CoOpportunity was failing by the end of 2014, the Iowa Department of Health Insurance stepped in to take over.

Unfortunately, customers didn't find out that the co-op was in trouble until it was too late. For example, I heard from a constituent who was enrolled in a plan through this co-op. Her husband suffered a heart attack early in January 2015. Because they were unable to enroll in a new plan before the first of the year, this family paid thousands of dollars toward the deductible on their CoOpportunity plan. With no other choice but to enroll in a new health plan, they faced a new deductible and more out of pocket costs. This was money they could have used for countless other expenses.

This family is only one of the many facing hardships in the wake of the co-op's failure. That is why I joined Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst in February to send a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the agency charged with overseeing the operations of these co-ops. By calling on CMS to address those affected by the collapse of CoOpportunity, it was our hope that the Obama administration would provide a timely and suitable plan to help Nebraskans caught in this mess. Unfortunately, CMS did not offer any relief to Nebraskans. As co-ops across the country continue to fail, this administration will be forced to face the reality that another part of ObamaCare is failing and hurting Americans.

A MODEL FOR RESEARCH AND TREATMENT

For over a decade, the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) has played a leading role in keeping our nation prepared to treat individuals affected by Ebola and other highly infectious diseases. In addition to delivering on-site training for hundreds of health care professionals across the country, UNMC has worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Emory University Hospital to develop a curriculum for national health care system training.

Earlier this year, I sent a letter to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Sylvia Burwell regarding this. In my letter, I encouraged Secretary Burwell to formalize an agreement with the UNMC to implement a long-term, national training strategy and play a major role in the continued treatment of patients. In July, UNMC was officially designated as a National Ebola Training and Education Center.

Nebraska is leading the nation in health research and treatment. This designation underscores the exceptional work by the men and women of UNMC. These individuals are making remarkable advancements in preparing for, and fighting against, the spread of dangerous diseases.

FIGHTING BREAST CANCER

In May, I joined Senators Roy Blunt of Missouri and Sherrod Brown of Ohio to introduce bipartisan legislation, known as the Breast Cancer Patient Education Act. This bill seeks to help educate breast cancer patients and provide important treatment information.

Breast cancer is a vicious disease that affects nearly every American family. From mothers and daughters to aunts and sisters, we are all touched by this sudden and unyielding disease. This bipartisan proposal will help educate breast cancer patients. It will also improve access to information, treatments, and other options for reconstructive surgery.

Federal law mandates coverage of breast reconstruction, even if such reconstruction is delayed after other treatments. The educational materials required by this bill would inform patients of this fact. The Breast Cancer Patient Education Act would use the HHS secretary's existing authority for educational activities and materials without incurring any additional costs.

As we race to find a cure, it's important that we also take the time to help patients learn about available services. With this bill, which passed Congress as part of the omnibus, we are taking action and uniting to create a better future for women across Nebraska and throughout our nation.



Honoring Our
VETERANS





We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our veterans. This year, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. The vintage airplanes that soared over the U.S. Capitol to commemorate Victory in Europe Day this summer brought to mind the countless heroes who served so we could live in freedom.

Over the past year, I have continued working with Nebraska's veterans to ensure their service is honored and they continue to receive the benefits and care they have earned.



Helping with the Hidden Wounds of War

One of the first pieces of legislation I voted for in the 114th Congress was the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This legislation, which was signed into law, requires an annual evaluation of the mental health care and suicide prevention efforts at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Additionally, the law creates a pilot program to provide peer support for veterans transitioning to civilian life.

It is a tragedy that so many of our veterans are losing their lives to suicide – a number that has at times eclipsed those lost on the battlefield. Our nation owes these brave men and women quality care and support for their defense of our nation. This bill is another step forward in keeping that promise.

The challenges of adjusting to civilian life can take a devastating toll on our troops and their families and loved ones. I will continue to work to provide the best care for our veterans.



Medical Care for Our Veterans

Veterans in Nebraska receive some of the best medical care by dedicated VA medical staff.

However, aging medical treatment facilities in Omaha and Lincoln are hindering efforts to provide the latest advancements. VA medical facilities in Nebraska need to be modernized.

I have participated in, and been encouraged by, recent meetings in Omaha, where they are progressing toward better medical facilities for veterans. I am also pleased to report that planning continues for a new VA outpatient clinic in Lincoln. Both of these initiatives will go a long way toward helping veterans get the care they need. I will continue to work with the VA as they move forward on long-term solutions for our Nebraska veterans.



Veterans History Project

I believe we must preserve Nebraska's proud history of military service. For several months, my state staff has been working on the Veterans History Project, which is an ongoing initiative with the Library of Congress. The project collects firsthand accounts of U.S. veterans and the civilians who directly supported them during wartime.

Through in-person interviews, veterans can have their experiences preserved at the Library of Congress for future use by historians. From World War II veterans to Nebraskans who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, and surrounding countries, the stories these veterans tell capture what it was to like to serve at various points in time.

Adjusting to Civilian Life

Veterans in Nebraska often face employment challenges when returning home following their service to our country. They bring valuable specialty and management skills from their military service. Nebraska and all states need to take advantage of their skills.

To aid in this effort, I cosponsored the Veterans Entrepreneurship Act. This legislation, which passed out of the Small Business Committee in April, would permanently waive fees associated with small and medium-sized Small Business Administration (SBA) express loans, making them less expensive for veterans. SBA fees for loan guarantees can typically cost borrowers thousands of dollars.

Providing additional fee waivers for veteran-owned small businesses is a simple and effective way to support entrepreneurship. The bill would also increase oversight of existing veteran SBA programs to identify solutions that would better serve veterans and reservists before and after deployment.

By helping businesses grow, we can provide greater opportunities for our veterans, our communities, and all of Nebraska.



Creating More Opportunities for Young Veterans

The five-year highway bill included a provision I championed that creates a new commercial driver pilot program for young veterans. The young men and women of our military have acquired important skills and training through their service overseas. Why not use these skills back here at home? Under this program, returning service members who hold a commercial driver's license can drive commercial trucks across state lines. Forty-nine states already permit drivers under the age of 21 to operate commercial vehicles within their borders.

This is a common-sense approach to allow these commercial drivers to deliver goods, for example, from Omaha to Council Bluffs.



THE GOOD

OD LIFE



DIST R

upholding
our
values

Nebraska is home to The Good Life. Our state and values make us proud. I bring these values with me to the U.S. Senate each and every day. This foundation, along with the feedback I receive from you, guides my work on the many issues facing our nation.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking plagues the world and our nation. This modern-day form of slavery has continued to grow all around us. Action is long overdue.

Our government has a responsibility to stand up and act for those kept in the shadows. That's why I cosponsored the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which passed the Senate in April and was signed into law.

By passing this bill, we took decisive action to protect women and children from this vile practice. Through enhanced reporting and mechanisms to reduce demand, this law serves as a next step in providing care for victims of trafficking and child pornography. It also protects victims in court by treating traffickers as violent criminals. By labeling traffickers in this way, convicts can now be detained while awaiting judicial proceedings.

ENFORCING OUR LAWS

For our nation to remain strong, we must know who is entering our country and what their intentions are. We need to secure our border, stop illegal immigration, and reform the current legal immigration system.

This year, we witnessed horrific crimes committed by immigrants who entered our country illegally. These crimes also exposed areas of the country that give safe harbor to illegal immigrants. These locations are commonly referred to as "sanctuary cities."

In Nebraska, three counties require a warrant from the Department of Homeland Security before going forward with a detainer request. Nebraska does better than most states in cooperating with the federal government on immigration issues. To ensure our immigration laws are being enforced, I voted for the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this common-sense legislation, which says that if a jurisdiction is not cooperating with federal immigration enforcement, it should not receive federal funds.

The bill also includes a provision known as Kate's Law, named after Kate Steinle. Kate was murdered in San Francisco by an illegal immigrant who had been convicted of several felonies and deported multiple times. This provision would impose a mandatory minimum jail sentence of five years for illegal immigrants who have either been convicted three or more times of illegally reentering the United States or committed a violent felony.

We are a nation of immigrants, but we are also a nation of laws. I will continue to monitor this issue and seek ways to improve the relationship between local communities and federal law enforcement agencies to deter and prevent illegal immigration.



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

In February, I joined Senator Lisa Murkowski, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Senator Martin Heinrich of New Mexico to introduce the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015.

The Sportsmen's Act includes a broad array of bipartisan measures that would enhance opportunities for hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The bill would also reauthorize key conservation programs, improve access to public lands, and help boost the outdoor recreation economy.

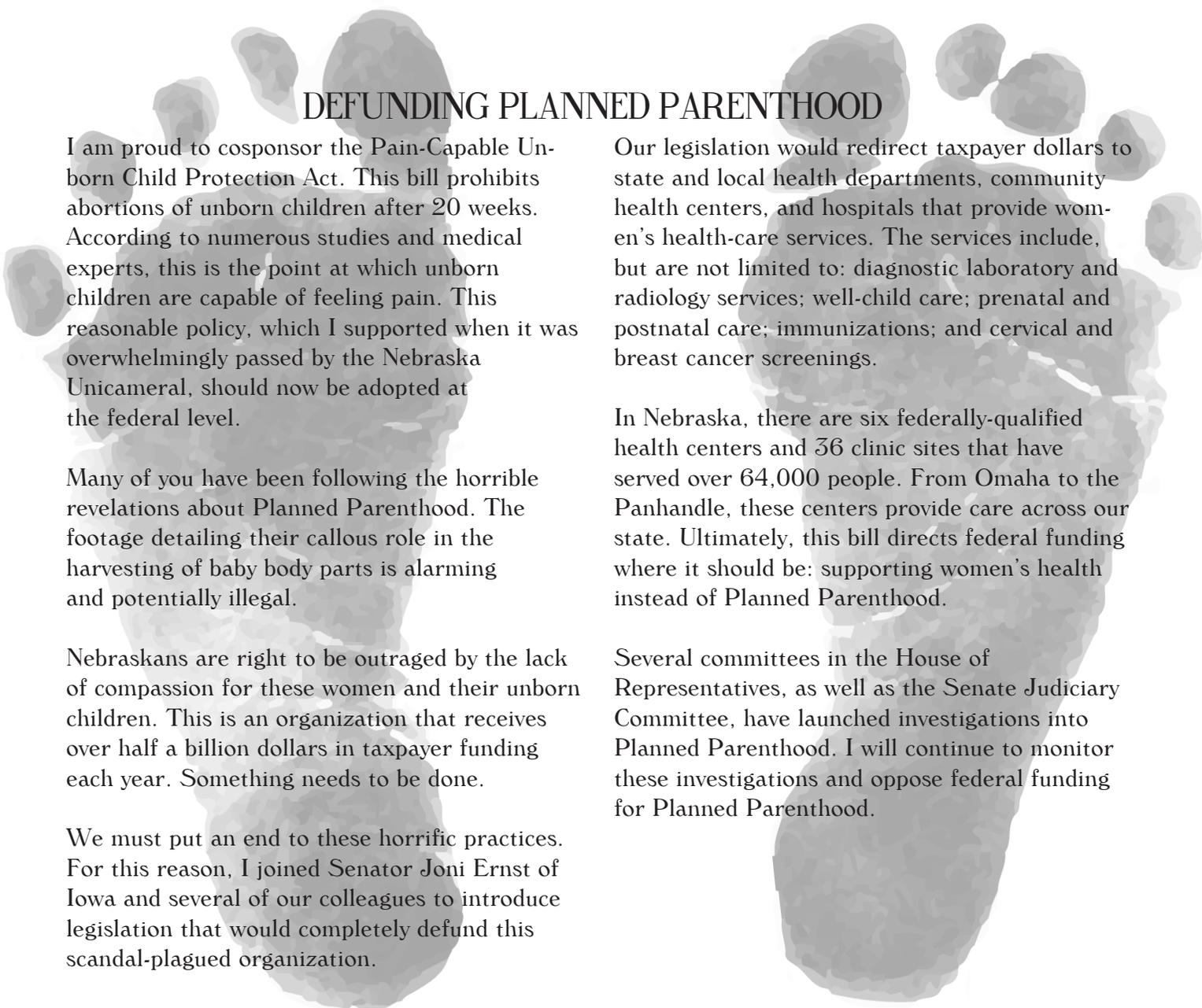
I am grateful for the opportunity to work with my colleagues on this legislation and promote our country's hunting, fishing, and conservation heritage.

STOPPING LIMITS ON THE SECOND AMENDMENT

I am a strong supporter of Second Amendment rights. Americans should not be punished when exercising their right to use firearms in accordance with the law.

Gun owners in Nebraska and across the nation have the right to access ammunition. I was outraged by reports of a proposal from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) that would have placed unnecessary limits on ammunition used by hunters and sports enthusiasts across the country. In March, I joined 52 of my colleagues in a letter to the ATF to stop this. Following our letter to the bureau's director, the ATF announced that it would eliminate the ban.

“THROUGHOUT MY TIME IN PUBLIC SERVICE, I HAVE BEEN COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING COMMON-SENSE, PRO-LIFE MEASURES THAT OFFER COMPASSION FOR WOMEN AND UNBORN CHILDREN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.”



DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD

I am proud to cosponsor the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. This bill prohibits abortions of unborn children after 20 weeks. According to numerous studies and medical experts, this is the point at which unborn children are capable of feeling pain. This reasonable policy, which I supported when it was overwhelmingly passed by the Nebraska Unicameral, should now be adopted at the federal level.

Many of you have been following the horrible revelations about Planned Parenthood. The footage detailing their callous role in the harvesting of baby body parts is alarming and potentially illegal.

Nebraskans are right to be outraged by the lack of compassion for these women and their unborn children. This is an organization that receives over half a billion dollars in taxpayer funding each year. Something needs to be done.

We must put an end to these horrific practices. For this reason, I joined Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa and several of our colleagues to introduce legislation that would completely defund this scandal-plagued organization.

Our legislation would redirect taxpayer dollars to state and local health departments, community health centers, and hospitals that provide women's health-care services. The services include, but are not limited to: diagnostic laboratory and radiology services; well-child care; prenatal and postnatal care; immunizations; and cervical and breast cancer screenings.

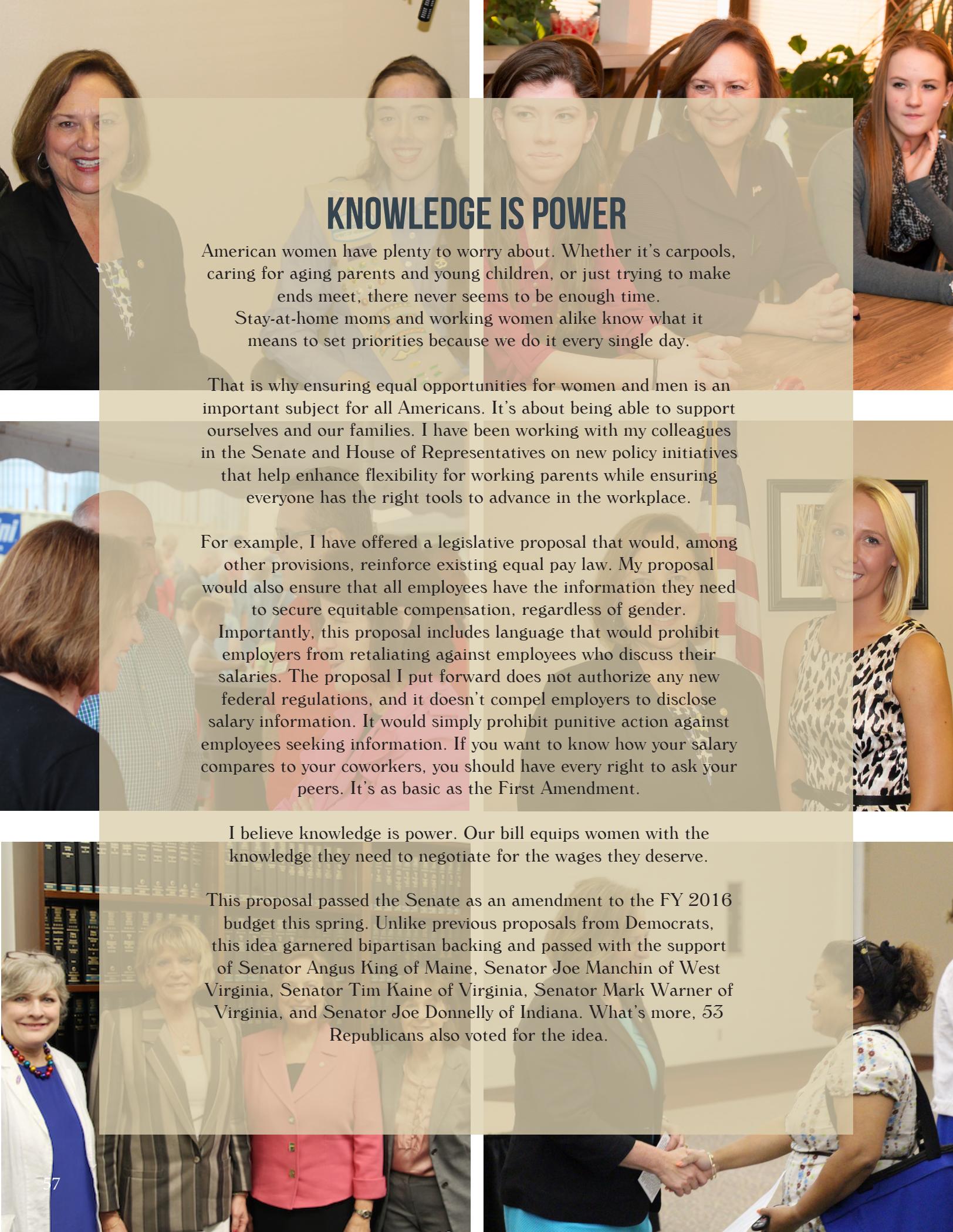
In Nebraska, there are six federally-qualified health centers and 36 clinic sites that have served over 64,000 people. From Omaha to the Panhandle, these centers provide care across our state. Ultimately, this bill directs federal funding where it should be: supporting women's health instead of Planned Parenthood.

Several committees in the House of Representatives, as well as the Senate Judiciary Committee, have launched investigations into Planned Parenthood. I will continue to monitor these investigations and oppose federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

STRONG FAMILIES
STRONG COMMUNITIES



**MAKING LIFE EASIER AND MORE FLEXIBLE FOR
WORKING FAMILIES IN NEBRASKA AND ACROSS
THE NATION STRENGTHENS OUR COMMUNITIES.
I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ON A NUMBER OF
PROPOSALS TO EMPOWER AMERICA'S FAMILIES
WITH THE TOOLS THEY NEED TO PROSPER.**



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

American women have plenty to worry about. Whether it's carpools, caring for aging parents and young children, or just trying to make ends meet, there never seems to be enough time.

Stay-at-home moms and working women alike know what it means to set priorities because we do it every single day.

That is why ensuring equal opportunities for women and men is an important subject for all Americans. It's about being able to support ourselves and our families. I have been working with my colleagues in the Senate and House of Representatives on new policy initiatives that help enhance flexibility for working parents while ensuring everyone has the right tools to advance in the workplace.

For example, I have offered a legislative proposal that would, among other provisions, reinforce existing equal pay law. My proposal would also ensure that all employees have the information they need to secure equitable compensation, regardless of gender.

Importantly, this proposal includes language that would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who discuss their salaries. The proposal I put forward does not authorize any new federal regulations, and it doesn't compel employers to disclose salary information. It would simply prohibit punitive action against employees seeking information. If you want to know how your salary compares to your coworkers, you should have every right to ask your peers. It's as basic as the First Amendment.

I believe knowledge is power. Our bill equips women with the knowledge they need to negotiate for the wages they deserve.

This proposal passed the Senate as an amendment to the FY 2016 budget this spring. Unlike previous proposals from Democrats, this idea garnered bipartisan backing and passed with the support of Senator Angus King of Maine, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia, Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, and Senator Joe Donnelly of Indiana. What's more, 53 Republicans also voted for the idea.

INCREASING FLEXIBILITY

More and more American women are the primary breadwinners for their families. As such, workplace flexibility has become a necessity for the 21st Century workforce. And it's not just children who require personal care and attention. It's also elderly parents.

I was happy to see a bipartisan plan I introduced with Senator King unanimously pass the Senate in April. Though this vote was non-binding, it demonstrates strong support for our reasonable idea.

Our proposal would encourage employers to voluntarily provide working families with more flexibility for paid time off.

Our plan is a balanced approach that respects employers' costs of doing business while also addressing employee needs. It focuses on providing incentives to employers who choose to offer working families, including hourly workers, the chance to take paid time off.



PROTECTING EXPECTANT MOTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Over the past 30 years, our nation has made important progress in providing women with the right protections and laws to shield them from workplace discrimination. But as workplace challenges continue to grow and evolve, our laws must keep up. That's why I was pleased to join my colleagues in support of the Pregnancy Discrimination Amendment Act. This bill would protect pregnant workers from discrimination.

Specifically, it would strengthen the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, which makes it illegal for an employer to discriminate against an applicant or employee on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The bill would require employers to treat pregnant workers in the same way as any other employees in similar working conditions. It would also ensure that the prohibitions on discrimination apply equally to labor unions and collective bargaining agreements.

CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES

Small businesses are responsible for much of the American economy's success. But without access to capital, too many Americans with limited resources are unable to build a business and see it grow.

That is why I was proud to introduce a bill this year that would strengthen an existing Small Business Administration microloan program. This bill would provide aspiring entrepreneurs with access to the affordable loans they need.

The bill, known as the Microloan Modernization Act, would help entrepreneurs with limited funding. This is a common-sense proposal that would provide more Americans with the tools they need to start their own businesses, escape poverty, and create jobs.





A BALANCED BUDGET

You sent me to Congress to stop wasteful spending, balance our budget, and allow our economy to grow. Families all across Nebraska have been forced to tighten their belts. Now, it's Washington's turn.

This year, the Senate passed a budget that offers a responsible way forward. I was pleased to support this proposal, which adheres to three basic rules: cut spending, balance the budget, and do it all without raising taxes. It makes significant spending cuts over the next ten years, and it ensures that taxpayer dollars are being used responsibly so we can move our country forward instead of adding burdens on our families.

The budget includes important spending cuts to remove waste, fraud, and abuse. In addition, the budget doesn't raise a dime in taxes. Not one dime. The answer to our debt crisis isn't taxing hard-working Americans more. Rather, the answer rests in a government that is a wise steward of the tax dollars already entrusted to it.

Because of these spending reductions, the Congressional Budget Office has estimated that the size of the economy could grow by 1.5 percent per person over the next ten years. This would provide an additional \$1,200 in income annually for Nebraska families. With that extra money, you can save for your children's college education, set aside for retirement, or take a family vacation.

This budget meets the government's core duties in a responsible manner. By focusing on policies that foster growth, we can create a prosperous America for future generations.

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