

**Connecting Science to Communities** 

# 2024 Legislative Candidate Guide

#### Our Process

In June, Nebraska Cures sent all legislative candidates a questionnaire asking for their views on a variety of research issues. Responses were accepted through the end of August and compiled into this document.

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A. The State of Nebraska helps fund medical research at its public institutions UNMC, UNO, UNL UNK, Creighton University, and Boys Town National Research Hospital. In fiscal year 2023, \$15,000,000 was appropriated for biomedical research and \$450,000 was appropriated specifically for stem cell research.
Do you support these existing appropriations? Yes No Unsure/Need more information
B. The Department of Health and Human Services has a variety of databases and registries to track important health information that has been used by researchers and public health experts to prevent, treat, and cure medical conditions. In recent years, there has been a substantial slowdown in accessing data by qualified research entities. Last legislative session, efforts were made to help cancer researchers gain more efficient and timely access to data in the cancer registry. Thanks to buy in from stakeholders, progress is being made without legislative action. However, there continue to be other types of data that researchers want more timely access to.  Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data?
YesNo Unsure/Need more information
C. In 2008 the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 606, a compromise bill pertaining to embryonic stem cell research being done at UNMC. LB 606 allows UNMC researchers to continue to do research on embryonic stem cells using federally approved cell lines, however, no state funds and facilities can be used to destroy or create an embryo for the purpose of research. The legislation also encouraged scientists to pursue research projects using non-embryonic stem cells and appropriated up to \$500,000 in state funds as matching funds each year for non-embryonic stem cell research projects. This law is still in effect.
Do you support existing state law? Yes No Unsure/Need more information
D. Comprehensive climate research is necessary for legislators to make data-based decisions to mitigate and respond to droughts, floods, and extreme weather, so in 2022, legislators supported funding to update Nebraska's climate research. Nebraska faced an extreme weather disaster with the floods of 2019 and in other recent years, we have experienced droughts. Droughts have been linked with infectious disease, food insecurity, and stress that leads to adverse mental health effects. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans?  Yes No Unsure/Need more information
E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities?
F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy?
G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren?
H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues?

(Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson)

#### Robert "Bob" Hallstrom

Website: https://bobhallstrom.com/

Social Media: @bobhallstromforlegislature Address: 591 S. 32nd Road, Syracuse, NE 68446

About Robert: www.bobhallstrom.com

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES**
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? YES; with respect to question B above, efforts should be made to minimize any burdens on providers who are subject to the reporting requirements and the privacy rights of those for whom the data is being reported and compiled should be respected and protected.



- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **YES**
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **Unsure/Need more information**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? Funding for these conditions would be in the upper tier of my budget priorities.
- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 2
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? Continuing research to find cures to illnesses is of vital importance. In addition, the frequency of mental health illnesses and substance use disorders among our youth and those who commit criminal acts present burdens on our educational system and criminal justice system, both in the courts and with regard to prison-overcrowding. We must continue to be diligent in our efforts to address these areas of concern.

# District 3 (Bellevue)

#### **Victor Rountree**

Website: www.Rountreeforlegislature.com

<u>Social Media</u>: Facebook: Rountree for Legislature <u>Address:</u> 2903 Schuemann Dr, Bellevue, NE, 68123

About Victor: https://rountreeforlegislature.com/

A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES** 

B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? **Yes** 

C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Yes** 

D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **Yes** 



- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? It is important to provide adequate healthcare resources and services to match our community's needs. By addressing these needs and prioritizing prevention, we can improve our public health, safety, and build a stronger Nebraska.
- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren?

1; scientific and medical research is extremely important to the future of our children and community. We must continue to support and invest in these areas.

H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? I believe that our public health experts should always be consulted and involved in conversations concerning relevant policy. Issues such as climate, mental health, or substance abuse require collaboration from policymakers and scientific experts. I hope to work closely with the scientific and research community when I'm elected.



#### **Dunixi Guereca**

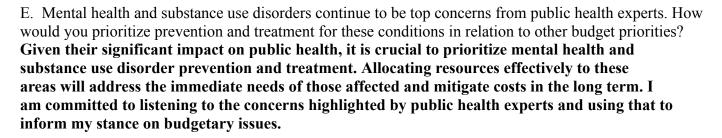
Website: www.dunixiguereca.com

Social Media: FB/Twitter(X): GuerecaforLeg Address: 2308 South 11th St, Omaha, NE 68108

#### Learn about Dunixi on his website.

A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES** 

- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? Yes
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Yes**
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **Yes**



- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren?

  1; supporting and investing in scientific and medical research is crucial for future generations.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? Policymakers must prioritize expert advice in science and public health, as these issues have been and are only getting more polarizing. We need experienced leaders who can work together to protect community health and safety.





#### John Cavanaugh

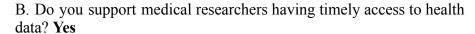
Website: https://www.cavanaughfornebraska.com/

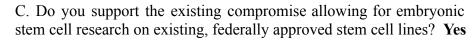
Social Media: @Cavanaugh4NE

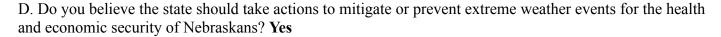
Address: 916 South 58th Street, Omaha, NE 68160

Learn about John on his website.

A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES** 







- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? I am currently the chair of the special mental health capacity study committee. When the report is finalized, I hope to propose some of the recommendations from the report.
- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren?
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? I have always supported Current research and hope we can invest in expanding research in Nebraska.



## District 13 (Northern Omaha)

#### **Ashlei Spivey**

Website: www.ashleifornebraska.com

Social Media: @ashleiforne

Address: PO Box 11369 Omaha NE 68111

#### Learn about Ashlei:

https://www.ashleifornebraska.com/about-me

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research for biomedical research? **YES**
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? **Yes**
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Yes**



- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **Yes**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? I would like to work with the experts (you and your membership) on what types of policies around prevention and treatment are necessary to address mental health and substance disorders to best position solutions with other budget priorities.
- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? I believe medical research is very important to the future of Nebraska and our families.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? My work is rooted within public health, specifically SDOH, and look forward to working with you to curate effective policy to better the lives of all Nebraskans.

(Northern Lancaster County)

#### **Seth Derner**

Website: https://sethderner.com/

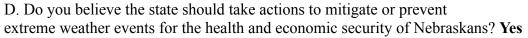
Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/dernerforlegislature

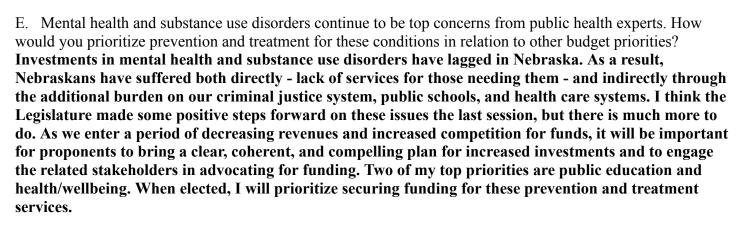
Address: 600 Blue Sage Blvd, Lincoln, NE 68521

Learn about Seth on his website.

A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES** 

- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? **Yes**
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Yes**





- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? Yes; I've been very disappointed in the lack of respect for medical experts shown by the current legislature. When elected, my office will always be open to hear out medical experts and their opinions will weigh heavily on any decisions I make.
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? We are facing numerous issues which we will not be able to craft effective public policy to combat without the expertise of scientists and medical experts. Listening to the experts will help us create better treatments for our children. We saw during the pandemic the importance of medical research.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? On question C, I marked "Yes" because I'm glad the state was able to reach a compromise that did not shut down all research. But, I'd prefer our researcher not feel confined when searching for solutions going forward. I would like to see Nebraska be known as a state where world-class science and research is valued and invested in. I support and respect medical experts for their critical contribution to public health. I will listen to your input, as I value the perspective and insights you hold. When it comes to policy, I will rely on insights of experts to guide decision making.



(Southwest Lincoln/Lancaster County)

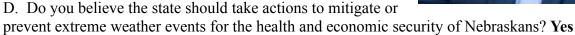
#### **Jason Prokop**

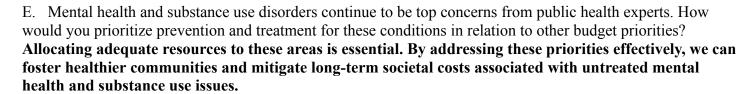
Website: https://jasonprokop.com/

<u>Social Media</u>: Facebook/Twitter: prokopforleg <u>Address:</u> 2340 Jenna Ln. Lincoln, NE 68512

#### Learn about Jason on his website.

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES**
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? **Yes**
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Yes**





- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **Yes**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? When addressing scientific and public health matters, policymakers should heed the guidance of experts. Unfortunately, we've witnessed an increasing politicization of scientific issues such as climate change and vaccines. I am committed to supporting research institutions and advancing evidence-based policies if elected.



(West Omaha/Millard Area)

#### Mary Ann Folchert

Website: www.electmaryannfolchert.com

Social Media:

https://www.instagram.com/maryann4ne/

https://www.facebook.com/folchertforlegislature

https://x.com/MaryAnn4NE

Address: 18730 Hansen Street, Omaha, NE 68130

#### Introduction/Bio:

My name is Mary Ann Folchert, and I'm a candidate running for Nebraska State Legislature in legislative district 31. I'm a lifelong Nebraskan, former public school teacher and special educator, community volunteer, mother of three, and guardian to my older brother who has intellectual and developmental disability. I decided to run for office because I was disappointed in my representation and frustrated by several recently passed laws. Our communities are best served by lawmakers who prioritize their



constituents and the greater good over divisive, partisan agendas. As a teacher, I learned how to work well with others, find common ground, and build consensus to address difficult challenges.

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? YES. I support existing appropriations and value the medical research provided by our public institutions.
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? Yes; I support efforts to help researchers gain efficient and timely access to data in order to better serve the public heath needs of our communities. Such information is valuable in helping researchers identify trends and respond appropriately to nee/ds when it comes to public health, treatment, and prevention of disease.
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? Yes; I fully support embryonic stem cell research.
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? Yes; as an agricultural state that depends on natural resources to help our ag-economy thrive, we must pay close attention to climate events like drought and other extreme weather conditions. To protect our resources and communities, lawmakers will need to be proactive and prepared for these types of events. Our state is better served by thinking proactively rather than reactively.
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? In terms of budget concerns, the state is paying a high price for not having adequate services in place and available for folks with mental health and substance abuse disorders. With a lack of providers and access, folks with mental health and substance abuse disorders end up being poorly served in emergency rooms and/or entangled with law enforcement. These folks are much better served in the community using providers and resources which address the root causes of their struggles. It makes more sense financially to use preventative care and treatment on the front end before folks end up in the ER or locked up in jail.

- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? Yes; it frustrates me that this question must even be asked. Policymakers should ABSOLUTELY consider data, science, and medical expertise when making decisions about public policy. I strongly support informed, evidence-based, data-driven decision-making.
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1 Scientific and medical research is critical to helping us adapt and respond to climate change, understand, treat, and prevent disease, and effectively respond to public health emergencies. Future prosperity depends on our ability to use informed, data-based decision making to create good, sound policies that will help- not hinder- our children and grandchildren in the years ahead.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? Thank you for giving me this opportunity to respond to your questions. Thank you also for the research and the work you do to promote public health across our state. Working together, we can ensure the good life for generations of Nebraskans.

(Phelps/Kearney/Adams Counties)

#### **Michelle Smith**

Website: michellefornebraska.com

Social Media:

facebook.com/michellefornebraska

Address: 1019 N Saunders Ave Hastings, NE 68901

#### Introduction/Bio:

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? **YES**
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? **YES**
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **Unsure/Need more information**



- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **YES**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? Mental health, substance abuse, and healthcare in general is my top priority. We need to address provider shortages through supporting education, ensuring adequate Medicaid reimbursement rates, and supporting early childhood intervention and other prevention modalities.
- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **YES**

- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1: Scientific and medical research enhances the prevention and treatment of disease.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? In regards to question C above, I support stem cell research while also supporting the state funding provided for non-embryonic stem cell research.

(Grand Island)

**Dan Quick** 

Website: quickfornebraska.com

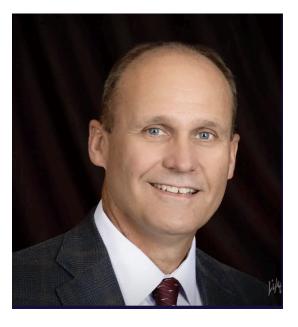
Social Media:

https://www.facebook.com/votedanquick

Address: 1019 Kennedy Dr Grand Island NE 68803

#### Introduction/Bio:

Dan was raised on a family farm outside of Hordville, Nebraska with four other siblings. After he graduated high school, he joined the workforce. Throughout his life he has worked at a grain elevator, in retail, construction, feedlot operations, and sand and gravel ready mix operations. He worked 28 years for the Grand Island Utilities Department at the Platte Generating Station. Dan has served as the President of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1597, as well as President of the Nebraska State Utilities Conference and Central Nebraska Central Labor



Council. Dan married his wife Alice in 1980 and has lived with her in Grand Island ever since, where they have raised three children and now have nine grandchildren. He was elected to the State Legislature in 2016 to represent District 35 and was elected to the Central Community

College Board of Governors in 2022. He is running for the legislature to represent the voices of working families in Grand Island and to make Nebraska a better place to raise a family.

- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? YES
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? YES
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **YES**
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **YES**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities? As a state, we have failed to get people suffering from mental health/substance abuse disorders access to proper treatment and prevention services. Mental health/substance abuse

services need to be a priority when crafting our budget next year. If we make the correct investments here, we could also save money in other parts of the budget. For example, the more we are able to invest in prevention/treatment programs, the less we need to spend on moving people through the criminal justice system. I am committed to working with the other members and stakeholders to secure this funding.

- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? YES. I've been very disappointed in the lack of respect for medical experts shown by the current legislature. When elected, my office will always be open to hear out medical experts and their opinions will weigh heavily on any decisions I make.
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1. If we didn't know before, we learned from the pandemic how important medical research is. We need to be making more investments here.
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? I believe listening to medical experts is crucial to crafting good public policy. My office will always be open to hearing your team's feedback on any legislation that comes before the body.

## District 45

(Bellevue/Eastern Sarpy County)

#### Sarah Centineo

Website: https://electsarahcentineo.com/

Social Media:

https://www.facebook.com/sarahcentineoforlegislature

https://x.com/centineo4ne

Instagram: centineo4legislature

Address: 1709 Childs Rd East, Bellevue, NE

Learn about Sarah on her website.

A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? Unsure/Need more informations - I want to make sure we are appropriately funding the research



- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? YES
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **No**
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **YES**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities?

Without a healthy and well populace, other priorities are not even attainable. We have the date and resources to do better in the areas of SUD and mental health, we must stop the culture war bologna

that ends up harming people so we can implement the services and treatments we need to address these issues that effect EVERY Nebraskan.

- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **YES**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues?

  I have spent my entire adult life advocating for the health and well beaing of children. The lack of funding and the deminization of public health is antithetical to the goal of supporting and caring for our communities, we can do so much better and I want to continue to be a part of the solution.

## District 47

(Sioux/Box Butte/Morrill/Cheyenne/Garden/Deuel/Grand/Arthur/ Keith Counties)

**Larry Bolinger** 

Website: www.LarryBolinger.com

Social Media:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/638130809585698

Address: 507 Niobrara Avenue

#### Introduction/Bio:

Larry is a veteran, a graduate of UNO, has a Bachelor of Science Degree, majored in Political Science, and minored in Criminology. He received a Master of Public Administration Degree from Bellevue University. Larry received the Omega Nu Lambda Honor Society for Academic Excellence in May of 2023. He ran his own contractor business for more than 20 years and authored 18 books. His last three books cover the 20 years he has spent in politics. He has written and researched more than 50 policies to help his community and State.



- A. Do you support these existing appropriations for biomedical research? YES
- B. Do you support medical researchers having timely access to health data? YES
- C. Do you support the existing compromise allowing for embryonic stem cell research on existing, federally approved stem cell lines? **YES**
- D. Do you believe the state should take actions to mitigate or prevent extreme weather events for the health and economic security of Nebraskans? **YES**
- E. Mental health and substance use disorders continue to be top concerns from public health experts. How would you prioritize prevention and treatment for these conditions in relation to other budget priorities?

This subject is one of the three areas of interest in my platform and it is something I worked on when I ran for Congress and Attorney General. This should be a top priority. Since the mass defunding that took place in 2018, this area of interest has been struggling. When our government shut down more

than a dozen facilities, that left law enforcement to utilize our correction facilities rather than get people the help they needed. This created the highest per capita prison overpopulation in the Nation and added significantly to homelessness in the Lincoln, Omaha, and Grand Island areas.

- F. Do you believe policymakers should consider data, science, and medical expertise into decisions about public policy? **YES**
- G. On a scale of 1 to 10 (one being most important), how important do you think scientific and medical research is to the futures of our children and grandchildren? 1
- H. Any final thoughts you would like to share about these and other critical public health issues? When I ran for Attorney General, many people brought up the issue of lack of support for people with Mental Health problems and lack of support for people with Drug addiction. After the mass shut down in 2018, that forced people in Western Nebraska to transport anyone in need of help to Grand Island, which is 300 miles away. Many times they could not get help so there is wasted trips. Shutting down those facilities made a major negative impact on Western Nebraska.

#### The Following Candidates did not return our questionnaire:

Dennis Schaardt (District 1)
Felix Ungerman 3
Gilbert Ayala (District 5)
Margo R. Juarez (District 5)
Tim C. Pendrell (District 7)
Julia K. Palzer (District 9)
Terrell McKinney (District 11)
Nick Batter (District 13)
Dave Wordekemper (Dist. 15)
Roxie Kracl (District 15)
Glen Meyer (District 17)
Mike Albrecht (District 17)

Rob Dover (District 19)
Jeanne M. Reigle (District 19)
Beau Ballard (District 21)
Dennis C. Fujan (District 23)
Jared Storm (District 23)
Carolyn Bosn (District 25)
Nicki Behmer Popp (Dist. 25)
Dawn Liphard (District 27)
Eliot Bostar (District 29)
Kathleen Kauth (District 31)
Dan Lonowski (District 33)
Ray Aguilar (District 35)
Stanley Clouse (District 37)

Lana Peister (District 37)
Tony Sorrentino (District 39)
Allison Heimes (District 39)
Daniel D. McKeon (District 41)
Ethan Clark (District 41)
Tanya Storer (District 43)
Tony Tangwall (District 43)
Rita Sanders (District 45)
Paul E. Strommen (District 47)
Bob Andersen (District 49)
Jen Day (District 49)