



LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

August 11, 2011

Strategic Air & Space Museum

7:30 a.m - 1:00 p.m.



Senator
Ben Nelson



Senator
Mike Johanns



Congressman
Jeff Fortenberry



Congressman
Adrian Smith



Congressman
Lee Terry



Frank M. Newport,
Ph.D.,
President & Editor in Chief of
Gallup Poll



LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT



August 11, 2011

Welcome to Nebraska's 2011 Federal Legislative Summit!

On behalf of our partner organizations, thank you for participating. Today's agenda is the culmination of planning and collaboration among our respective chambers of commerce. Your presence here today and continued involvement is vital to our efforts as we work to influence and help shape federal legislation that will affect the business community and Nebraska's future.

We would like to thank our delegation of U. S. Senators and Congressmen for taking part today. Please take this opportunity to ask questions and understand the challenges being faced in Washington. We are honored to have Editor in Chief of Gallup Poll, Frank Newport, Ph.D., with us to provide our keynote address at lunch.

We have expanded the agenda to include an afternoon Summit geared towards Nebraska's young professionals. Their focus will be on young elected leaders and talent attraction and retention efforts in Nebraska.

We understand that the entire state is best served when our chambers work in partnership. We hope that this year's Summit will provide our federal delegation with a positive impression of our shared commitment to listen, engage and provide helpful input – now and in the future.

Again, thank you for your participation in Nebraska's 2011 Federal Legislative Summit.

Sincerely,



Wendy Birdsall, CCE, IOM
President
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce



David G. Brown
President and CEO
Greater Omaha Chamber



Megan Lucas, IOM
President & CEO
Bellevue Chamber of
Commerce



Barry Kennedy, CAE, IOM
President
Nebraska Chamber of
Commerce

agenda~

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

7:30 AM **REGISTRATION** *Atrium & Hanger B*

8:00 AM **CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE COFFEE** *Hanger B*
Continental breakfast and networking

8:50 AM **WELCOME**
Wendy Birdsall, President
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

8:55 AM **INTRODUCTION & MODERATOR OF THE NEBRASKA CONGRESSIONAL FORUM**
David G. Brown, President and CEO
Greater Omaha Chamber

9:00 AM **NEBRASKA CONGRESSIONAL FORUM**
U. S. Senator Mike Johanns
U. S. Senator Ben Nelson
Congressman Lee Terry
Congressman Adrian Smith
Congressman Jeff Fortenberry - *Master of Ceremonies*

Q &A to follow - moderated by David G. Brown

11:15 AM **COMMENTS**
Megan Lucas, President
Bellevue Chamber of Commerce

11:30 AM **BREAK**

12:00 **LUNCH PROGRAM** *Hanger B*
NOON *Barry Kennedy, President*
Nebraska Chamber of Commerce
Governor Dave Heineman
Introduction of Keynote Speaker
Jim Krieger, Chair
Greater Omaha Chamber
Gallup
Keynote Speaker
Frank Newport, Ph.D., Editor in Chief
Gallup Poll
Closing Comments
Wendy Birdsall, President
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

1:00 PM

ADJOURN LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

Young Professionals Legislative Summit to start immediately following in the ConAgra Theater

Young Professionals Legislative Summit
schedule on page 48.

Help structure future policy events by
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We value your opinion!



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bio~

U.S. SENATOR MIKE JOHANNNS



U.S Senator Mike Johannns

johanns.senate.gov

WASHINGTON, D.C.

404 Russell Senate
Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510
202.224.4224
Fax: 202.228.0436

KEARNEY

4111 Fourth Ave., Ste 26
Kearney, NE 68845
308.236.7602
Fax: 308.236.7473

LINCOLN

294 Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall
North
Lincoln, NE 68508
402.476.1400
Fax: 402.476.0605

SCOTTSBLUFF

115 Railway St., Ste C102
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308.632.6032
Fax: 308.632.6295

OMAHA

9900 Nicholas St.,
Ste 325
Omaha, NE 68114
402.758.8981
Fax: 402.758.9165


On January 6, 2009, Mike Johannns was sworn in as U.S. Senator for Nebraska. He won the support of an overwhelming majority of Nebraskans by demonstrating principled leadership throughout 25 years of public service.

Senator Johannns serves on five committees: Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Environment and Public Works (EPW); Veterans' Affairs; and Indian Affairs. He is the Ranking Member on the Agriculture Committee's Livestock, Dairy, Poultry, Marketing and Agriculture Security Subcommittee; the Banking Committee's Security, International Trade and Finance Subcommittee; and the EPW Committee's Oversight Subcommittee.

Johannns became the 28th Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in January 2005. For nearly three years he worked to expand foreign market access for U.S. producers, promoted the growth of the renewable fuels industry and advanced cooperative conservation. Additionally, Johannns developed an in-depth farm bill proposal, which became the foundation for improvements and reforms adopted in the final 2008 farm bill.

Johannns served as Nebraska's 38th governor from 1999 to 2005. As governor, he promoted an agenda of tax relief, less government, building the economy, protecting families, and ensuring the health, safety, and success of Nebraska's children.

He grew up on a farm where he learned a work ethic that has been put to use serving the people of Nebraska and this country. The values he developed while growing up serve as the foundation for his commitment to public service.



Johanns is a graduate of St. Mary's University of Minnesota. He earned a law degree from Creighton University in Omaha and practiced law in O'Neill and Lincoln. Johanns served on the Lancaster County Board from 1983 to 1987, and on the Lincoln City Council from 1989 to 1991. He was elected mayor of Lincoln in 1991 and was reelected in 1995 without opposition. He successfully ran for governor in 1998 and was reelected in 2002.

Johanns is married to Stephanie Johanns, former Lancaster County Commissioner and Nebraska State Senator. The couple has two children and five grandchildren.

bio~ U.S. SENATOR BEN NELSON



U.S Senator Ben Neson

bennelson.senate.gov

WASHINGTON, D.C.
720 Hart Senate
Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
202.224.6551
Fax: 202.228.0012

OMAHA
7602 Pacific St.,
Ste. 205
Omaha, NE 68114
402.391.3411
Fax: 402.391.4725

LINCOLN
440 North 8th St.,
Ste. 120
Lincoln, NE 68508
402.441.4600
Fax: 402.476.8753

SCOTTSBLUFF
308.631.7614

KEARNEY
308.293.5818

SOUTH SIOUX CITY
402.209.3595


With a reputation for problem solving and a voting record to support his common sense approach, Nebraska's Senator Ben Nelson has carved out a bipartisan role in an often partisan Washington environment. Senator Nelson is a pragmatist who doesn't let political labels or agendas stand in the way of doing what's responsible and fair.

Working with Republicans and Democrats, Nelson forged agreements between the Bush Administration and the Senate on tax cuts, Medicare reform, and homeland security. During the Obama Administration, Senator Nelson co-founded a bipartisan "Jobs Squad" of senators that cut \$108 billion in spending from an economic recovery plan that ultimately became law. Senator Nelson's efforts focused the bill on job creation and tax relief to turn around the nation's troubled economy.

This sensible approach is rooted in how Nelson was raised in McCook (pop. 8,000), in Red Willow County. This southwest Nebraska town has been home to two U.S. Senators and three Governors. Perhaps Nelson's future was written in the stars, for at age 17 he won his first election, as governor in a mock legislature, sparking a life-long interest in public service.

As a young man at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Nelson spent his Sundays serving as a lay minister to rural Nebraska congregations. Foreshadowing his future in public service, Nelson chose law school over the ministry. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1963, a master's degree in 1965 and a law degree from the University of Nebraska in 1970.

Following his time as a student, Nelson enjoyed a successful career in insurance law. He served as CEO of the



Central National Insurance Group, as chief of staff and executive vice president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, and as director of the Nebraska Department of Insurance.

In 1990, Ben Nelson entered Nebraska politics by running Governor and defeated the incumbent by 4,000 votes. As Governor, Nelson pledged to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas to move forward as "One Nebraska" and to create a "more efficient and effective state government."

In 1994, Nelson was the first Nebraska Governor to be elected to a second term in two decades. He was re-elected with 74% of the vote and the largest margin of victory for a Nebraska Governor in half a century.

Near the end of his tenure, the Omaha World-Herald wrote, "After nearly eight years in office, Gov. Ben Nelson has worn well with Nebraskans ... the governor's modest style and conservative fiscal politics connected with voters on a statewide level."

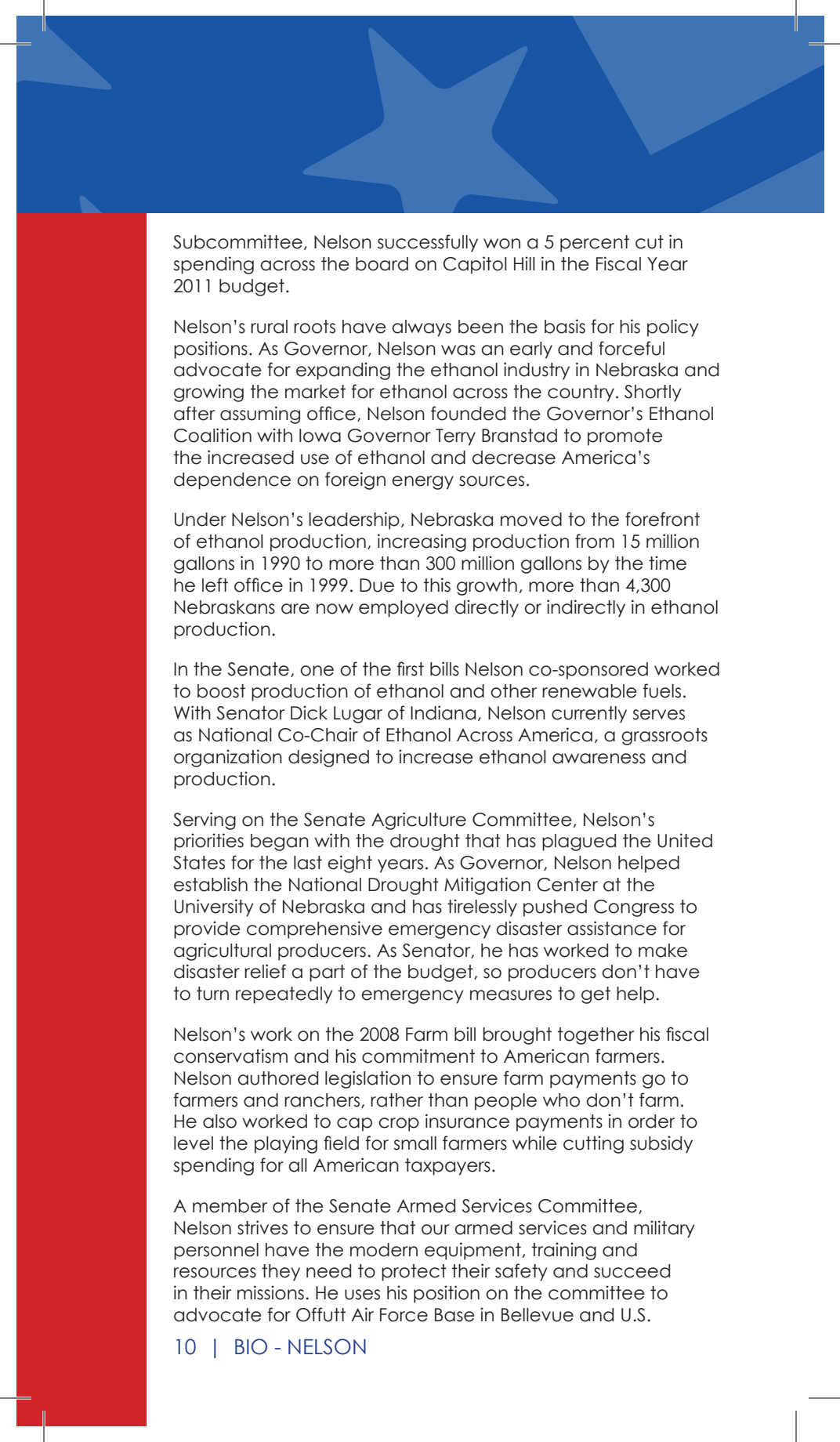
In 2000, Nelson ran to represent the people of Nebraska in the U.S. Senate. Nelson, a conservative Democrat, carried the day even as Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush easily won Nebraska, illustrating that Nelson's connection to the people goes well beyond party labels or partisan politics. After his first term in the Senate, Nelson was re-elected with 64% on the vote in 2006.

As a former two-term governor, Nelson remains a firm believer in states' rights. He has a firsthand understanding of the burden a federal mandate can put on state budgets. Because of this, Nelson supported full federal funding for education for children with disabilities, fought against forcing states to expand Medicaid without additional federal funding, and opposed the No Child Left Behind Act because its requirements duplicated Nebraska's existing standards and were not fully funded.

Nelson's record of balancing Nebraska's budget as governor is an asset as he works to reduce federal spending in a way that is effective and fair. He led the state to eight straight balanced budgets and record balances in Nebraska's General Fund. Nelson cut state income taxes, cut state sales taxes, and helped local governments offer property tax relief while protecting Nebraska's investments in education, agriculture, health care, and economic development.

An advocate for fiscal responsibility, Nelson strongly believes federal spending must be brought under control. He insists that budget cuts be based on shared sacrifice, not politics.

As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Legislative Branch



Subcommittee, Nelson successfully won a 5 percent cut in spending across the board on Capitol Hill in the Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

Nelson's rural roots have always been the basis for his policy positions. As Governor, Nelson was an early and forceful advocate for expanding the ethanol industry in Nebraska and growing the market for ethanol across the country. Shortly after assuming office, Nelson founded the Governor's Ethanol Coalition with Iowa Governor Terry Branstad to promote the increased use of ethanol and decrease America's dependence on foreign energy sources.


Under Nelson's leadership, Nebraska moved to the forefront of ethanol production, increasing production from 15 million gallons in 1990 to more than 300 million gallons by the time he left office in 1999. Due to this growth, more than 4,300 Nebraskans are now employed directly or indirectly in ethanol production.

In the Senate, one of the first bills Nelson co-sponsored worked to boost production of ethanol and other renewable fuels. With Senator Dick Lugar of Indiana, Nelson currently serves as National Co-Chair of Ethanol Across America, a grassroots organization designed to increase ethanol awareness and production.

Serving on the Senate Agriculture Committee, Nelson's priorities began with the drought that has plagued the United States for the last eight years. As Governor, Nelson helped establish the National Drought Mitigation Center at the University of Nebraska and has tirelessly pushed Congress to provide comprehensive emergency disaster assistance for agricultural producers. As Senator, he has worked to make disaster relief a part of the budget, so producers don't have to turn repeatedly to emergency measures to get help.

Nelson's work on the 2008 Farm bill brought together his fiscal conservatism and his commitment to American farmers. Nelson authored legislation to ensure farm payments go to farmers and ranchers, rather than people who don't farm. He also worked to cap crop insurance payments in order to level the playing field for small farmers while cutting subsidy spending for all American taxpayers.

A member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Nelson strives to ensure that our armed services and military personnel have the modern equipment, training and resources they need to protect their safety and succeed in their missions. He uses his position on the committee to advocate for Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue and U.S.



Strategic Command (STRATCOM), a unified command center headquartered at Offutt which provides global security for U.S. national security interests including space, cyberspace, global strike and deterrence, and combating weapons of mass destruction.

As Chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, Nelson works closely with STRATCOM officials to ensure the Command is successful in its mission. The subcommittee has jurisdiction over strategic forces, nuclear weapons, national defense and nuclear deterrence, space programs, and ballistic missile defense.

Nelson's commitment to strengthening our military goes beyond active duty personnel, and he is committed to keeping America's promise to our veterans. As a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee from 2001 through 2004, he pushed to preserve access to health care for Nebraska veterans and to expand the Veterans Administration's use of clinics to provide quality care. He is now working with the Veterans Administration to replace the aging VA Hospital in Omaha so that it can better meet the needs of our growing population of veterans.

Ben Nelson and his wife, Diane, continue to live in Omaha. They have four children, Kevin, Sarah, Christie, and Patrick, as well as five grandchildren. Nelson commutes home nearly every weekend to be with his family and with the people of Nebraska.

Nelson enjoys spending time with his family, reading, hunting, fishing, and the whole of outdoor life. An avid hunter, Nelson has won both the domestic Grand Slam and international World Slam for wild turkeys and has hunted on safari in Africa.

bio~

U.S. CONGRESSMAN LEE TERRY



U.S. Congressman Lee Terry

leeterry.house.gov


WASHINGTON DC
2331 Rayburn House Of-
fice Bldg
Washington, DC 20515
202.225.4155
Fax: 202.226.5452

OMAHA
11717 Burt Street, Suite
106
Omaha, NE 68154
402.397.9944
Fax: 402.397.8787

A lifelong Nebraskan, Congressman Lee Terry has worked continually to empower the people of the Second District. Terry has been a leader for Nebraska, advocating American energy independence, respect for life, and fiscally sound balanced budget. A strong proponent of limited government, Terry has been an outspoken and leading opponent against government intrusion of health care and the Internet.

Congressman Terry currently serves on the influential Energy and Commerce Committee, which is the oldest standing legislative committee in the House. This committee oversees energy, commerce, public health, telecommunications, and many other important issues. Seen as a knowledgeable leader in the telecommunications field, he was elected to the Vice-Chair of the Subcommittee of Communications and Technology at the start of the 112th Congress. Terry is a member of the Subcommittee of Energy and Power and the Subcommittee for Oversight and Investigation within the Energy and Commerce Committee as well.

As a proponent of an "All of the Above" approach to energy, Congressman Terry believes in utilizing the resources of the United States, along with finding new and innovative alternative energy sources, in order to separate from the dependence on foreign oil. The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which was a major overhaul to increase the fuel economy of cars and trucks, authored by Terry, led to saving millions of barrels of imported oil lessening our reliance on foreign sources of energy. He has also been successful in passing legislation promoting E85 gasoline, geothermal technology, and the development commercial markets for geothermal technology, and alternative fuels.



In 2009, Congressman Terry was named one of the most bipartisan members of the House of Representatives by The Hill newspaper and was named a “heavyweight” in telecommunications and media policy in the 111th Congress.

Congressman Terry is also proud to serve as co-chair of the Congressional Caucus to Fight and Control Methamphetamine, the House Impact Aid Coalition, and the Congressional Hockey Caucus. He is also a member of the Congressional Taskforce on Alzheimer's, the Congressional Physical Fitness Caucus, the Pro-Life Caucus, and the Humanities Council.

Congressman Terry was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November of 1998. Prior to serving as a Representative, Congressman Terry served eight years on the Omaha City Council. He also was a managing partner in a local law firm. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Nebraska Lincoln and his Juris Doctorate from Creighton University Law School. Congressman Terry lives in Omaha with his wife Robyn and their three sons, Nolan, Ryan, and Jack.

bio~

U.S. CONGRESSMAN ADRIAN SMITH



U.S. Congressman Adrian Smith

adriansmith.house.gov

WASHINGTON, D.C.
503 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202.225.6435
Fax: 202.225.0207

SCOTTSBLUFF
416 Valley View Drive,
Suite 600
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
308.633.6333
Fax: 308.633.6335

GRAND ISLAND
1811 W.Second St., Ste
105
Grand Island, NE 68803
308.384.3900
Fax: 308.384.3902


Congressman Adrian Smith has earned praise for his leadership, hard work and dedication to Nebraska commonsense. Smith has tackled issues ranging from biofuels and other forms of domestic energy to transportation research and development to fashioning legislation promoting rural America.

Smith has consistently voted against tax increases, massive government bailouts, and was unwavering in his opposition of the misguided health care bill now creating massive uncertainty for our nation's job creators.

Smith, a co-sponsor of the Balanced Budget Amendment and a supporter of a Congressional earmark moratorium, has earned a reputation as a solid conservative through his votes to protect the rights of gun owners, efforts to limit the scope of government, and his strong pro-life voting record.

He has introduced legislation to encourage, develop, and sustain large animal veterinary services in rural communities an effort which is supported by more than 80 agriculture and veterinary organizations. Smith's Small-Scale Hydropower Enhancement Act would help stimulate the economy of rural America, empower local irrigation districts to generate revenue, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels by encouraging the use of small-scale hydropower projects.

Smith, who serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means, actively promotes access for Nebraska agriculture products in Asia, South America, and throughout the world. Nebraska's \$4 billion in worldwide agricultural exports creates \$6.7 billion in additional economic activity. Smith



supports trade agreements which will continue to create new opportunities for our agriculture producers and their products to keep Nebraska's economy strong.

Smith's assignment on the Ways and Means Committee also puts the Nebraskan on the front lines in the debate on how to create jobs, promote economic growth, and directly impact tax policy - such as the Death Tax which threatens family farms and ranches.

The Gering native, whose family has called Nebraska home for six generations, was first introduced to politics by his grandfather. Prior to his election to Congress, Smith served his hometown as a member of the City Council. He then represented District 48 for eight years in the Unicameral.

He continues to reside in Gering.

bio~
U.S. CONGRESSMAN
JEFF FORTENBERRY



**U.S.
Congressman
Jeff Fortenberry**

fortenberry.house.gov

WASHINGTON, DC
1535 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C.
20515
202.225.4806
Fax: 202.225.5686

LINCOLN
301 South 13th Street,
Suite 100
Lincoln, NE 68508
402.438.1598
866.725.5255
Fax: 402.438.1604

NORFOLK
125 S. 4th St., Ste. 101
Norfolk, NE 68701
402.379.2064
Fax: 402.379.2101

FREMONT
P.O. Box 377 629
Broad Street
Fremont, NE 68026
402.727.0888

In November 2004, Jeff Fortenberry was elected to the United States House of Representatives to serve Nebraska's First Congressional District.

Jeff has an extensive background in economics and public policy. Prior to serving in Congress, he worked as a publishing industry executive in Lincoln, where he also served on the Lincoln City Council from 1997-2001. In Congress, Jeff serves on the Foreign Affairs Committee with significant responsibilities for Middle Eastern affairs. He also serves on the Agriculture Committee, where he helped write the House Farm Bill and serves as Chairman of the Department Operations, Oversight, and Credit Subcommittee. Jeff also has significant personal experience in small business, and early in his career he worked as a policy analyst for the United States Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations. Jeff earned a bachelor's degree in economics and two master's degrees, one in public policy. He and his wife Celeste live in Lincoln and have five little girls.

Jeff's work in Congress is rooted in the belief that the strength of our nation depends on the strength of our families and communities. His efforts are focused on five critical areas: strengthening national security and diplomatic engagement; promoting alternative energy and environmental sustainability; increasing small business entrepreneurship and rural vitality; creating patient-centered health care, and upholding family life and culture.



**Frank Newport,
Ph.D.**

Editor in Chief

**Gallup World Head-
quarters**

The Gallup Building
901 F Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
20004
202.715.3030
Fax: 202.715.3045

Frank Newport, Ph.D., is Gallup's Editor in Chief. He is coauthor of *Winning the White House 2008: The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion and the Presidency* and author of *Polling Matters: Why Leaders Must Listen to the Wisdom of the People*. He is coauthor with Stuart Rothenberg of *The Evangelical Voter* and coeditor of *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 2004-2009*. His articles and op-ed pieces have appeared in the *American Sociological Review*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and many other publications.

Dr. Newport is 2010-2011 president of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. He is also vice-president of the National Council on Public Polls and serves on the Board of Directors for the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. He has served on the University of Michigan Program in Survey Methodology External Advisory Committee.

Dr. Newport is a frequent guest on radio and television programs, discussing public opinion and the collective views of the American people. His weekly radio show "What Are We Thinking?" is produced and syndicated by Philadelphia NPR affiliate WHY-FM.

Before joining Gallup, Dr. Newport taught sociology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, was news director and talk show host at KTRH Radio in Houston, and was a partner at a market research and public opinion research firm in Houston. He received his doctorate degree in sociology from the University of Michigan.

notes~

issues~

LINCOLN FEDERAL OPPORTUNITIES AGENDA



Chamber of Commerce



1135 M Street,
Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402.436.2350
www.LCOC.com

**Wendy Birdsall, CCE,
IOM**

President
402.436.2350
wbirdsall@LCOC.com

Bruce Bohrer, IOM

Executive Vice
President & General
Counsel
402.436.2358 - direct
402.430.2358 - cell
bbohrer@LCOC.com

Kyle Fischer

Public Policy
Specialist
402.436.2352 - direct
kfischer@LCOC.com

The Lincoln Chamber's key federal objectives for 2011:

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING –

As we continue to plan and build for private investment growth, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce views the shortfall in infrastructure funding as one of the biggest obstacles facing communities across Nebraska, as well as across our nation. Failure to address this funding shortfall will have serious economic implications for our state and nation, including its major cities. The Lincoln Chamber will work cooperatively with the City of Lincoln, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations & coalitions to develop and advance solutions. Infrastructure funding will be a primary focus of our federal policy efforts. The Lincoln Chamber will continue to support efforts to secure federal funds related to Lincoln's South and East Beltway projects. The Lincoln Chamber calls upon our federal delegation to prioritize and work diligently toward funding solutions as they consider reauthorization of the federal highway bill.

**RESEARCH & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT –**

The Lincoln Chamber will place strong emphasis on supporting research-related federal requests that are complementary to the strategic plan adopted by the Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development. The Lincoln Chamber is certain that significant opportunities exist for University of Nebraska campuses to benefit from grants and other sources to fund research & development projects. Further, the Lincoln Chamber believes innovation is essential to job and investment growth in today's economy, and that university research

A

provides a base for such innovation. Capitalizing on opportunities for public/private partnerships that leverage such research to create high-quality jobs and build our innovation capacity will be essential to Nebraska's future growth. The Lincoln Chamber will work cooperatively with the University of Nebraska, 2015 Vision, the City of Lincoln and other organizations & coalitions to help secure federal research funding, facility funding, and economic development funding.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY –

The Lincoln Chamber believes federal elected officials must address entitlement reform and federal spending discipline as serious issues facing our country. Health care system overhaul legislation was enacted with a promise the new health care entitlement would produce substantial deficit reduction. The promised deficit reduction will require a dramatic change in the way the U.S. Congress operates. The Lincoln Chamber calls upon all NE federal delegation members to support greater fiscal discipline, to focus on productive expenditures, and practice reasoned spending restraint in the adoption of federal budgets in order to create a more competitive climate for private sector job growth.

ENERGY POLICY –

The Lincoln Chamber believes our economic future and competitive position are closely tied to our national energy policy. Federal policy initiatives should support: 1) Agriculture's vital role in developing sustainable energy; 2) Market-based, long-term plans to create more available and affordable energy; and 3) Rational & economic-based approaches on energy incentives.

CVB AND EVENT FACILITIES NEEDS –

The Lincoln Chamber will work to support and assist the Lincoln Convention and Visitors Bureau in working to execute its mission of bringing more visitors, events, and conventions to the Lincoln area. The Lincoln Chamber will support efforts to secure federal funding related to development of the West Haymarket Arena, new sports fields, environmental assessments, infrastructure, and planning for the West Haymarket sports triangle.

issues~

GREATER OMAHA CHAMBER FEDERAL INTERESTS



1301 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68102
402.346.5000
402.346.7050 - fax
www.omahachamber.org

David G. Brown
President and CEO
402.346.5000
dbrown@omahachamber.org

Wendy Boyer
Vice President,
Community Affairs
402.346.5000
wboyer@omahachamber.org

Tim Stuart
Legislative Counsel
Lincoln Office
402.474.4960
402.474.5178 - Fax
tstuart@omahachamber.org

Joseph Young
Director of Public
Policy
Lincoln Office
402.474.4960
402.474.5178 - Fax
jyoung@omahachamber.org

The Greater Omaha Chamber's key federal objectives for 2011:

NATIONAL DEFENSE

The Greater Omaha Chamber strongly supports efforts of the Department of Defense and Congress to fully modernize facilities at Offutt Air Force Base, particularly the new StratCom headquarters building. The missions based at Offutt are vital to the security of the United States, and base operations and supporting businesses have a positive \$2.5 billion annual economic impact on the area.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

The Chamber strongly supports construction of the new Omaha Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The current hospital is aging, has serious structural deficiencies, and is too small to accommodate the 50,000 veterans it serves each year.

SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Chamber will continue to work with federal officials and the congressional delegation to find ways to address the high cost of replacing Omaha's combined sewer system. The cost of this unfunded federal mandate will exceed \$3 billion with financing charges, all of which will fall on the Omaha community. This threatens thousands of area jobs and would have widespread serious economic impact should employers be forced to move operations elsewhere. Employers that are hardest hit by these costs are engaged in agricultural processing and buy commodities from many areas of Nebraska.

TRANSPORTATION

The Chamber supports enactment of a long-term federal highway program that will ensure a fair and timely return of transportation funds generated in Nebraska. The failure to reauthorize the federal program has presented state and local governments with continued uncertainty as to the availability of funding, unnecessarily slowing construction of vital projects, long-term planning efforts, and economic development across Nebraska and the region.

REGULATORY CLIMATE

The Chamber believes that we must prioritize efforts to attain the lowest realistic level of regulation of businesses by federal agencies. Of particular concern is increasing regulation by administrative action, such as those of the National Labor Relations Board that would undermine state right-to-work laws or force employers to act as advocates for unionization efforts, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's crackdown on the housing industry, and the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation of carbon dioxide emissions. The Chamber also opposes congressional proposals such as federalization of collective bargaining policy for public employees.

TRADE

The Chamber supports approval of pending trade agreements with Columbia, Korea, and Panama, and the pursuit of new free trade agreements. Nationally, 9,000 jobs in the U.S. are supported for every \$1 billion of goods that are exported. Nebraska's is an export economy, and the three pending agreements would increase export of agricultural goods from the state by \$123 million per year and create more than 1,100 jobs.

ENERGY POLICY

The Chamber supports an energy policy that does not penalize the Midwest and Great Plains regions for their necessary utilization of coal-fired generation plants through legislation such as cap-and-trade.

issues~

BELLEVUE CHAMBER

FEDERAL FOCUS AREAS



1102 Galvin Rd. South
Bellevue, NE 68005
BellevueNebraska.com

Megan A. Lucas, IOM
President & CEO
402.898.3000 - office
402.657.6465 - cell
402.291.8729 - fax

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DIVISION

The goals of the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce Government Affairs Division are to protect and strengthen federal programs impacting the local economy, pursue the development of infrastructure that encourages business growth, and encourage a cooperative spirit with local governments. This division acts as an advocate for pro-business policies and legislation that promote economic growth.

The Chamber works at the local, state and federal levels to ensure the voice of the Bellevue-Offutt businesses is heard. Whenever the state legislature is in session, our government affairs team is in Lincoln, working on behalf of our members, and the entire Bellevue-Offutt Business community. The Bellevue Chamber also provides opportunities for members to get involved in policy issues, get to know their elected officials and have a say in creating a business-friendly climate in the state.

Federal Focus Areas include:

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Grow and sustain missions currently located at Offutt Air Force Base; recruiting new missions; Contractor Conversion (in-sourcing); maintaining federal impact aid to our school system; construction of the United States Strategic Command headquarters/



INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

Protect dedicated transportation funds and spend the money on infrastructure, instead of diverting money to other programs

TAXES

Defend pro-growth tax policies that preserve our global competitiveness, and it opposes tax increases that reduce businesses' ability to grow, invest, and create jobs.

REGULATORY REFORM

A dramatic increase in burdensome regulation by the Congress and administration is causing tremendous uncertainty for business owners around the country. The path to recovery lies in bringing certainty to the regulatory environment and putting in place smart policies that allow businesses and the economy to grow.

MINIMUM WAGE

Oppose advances to increase the current federal minimum wage amount. Increases do more harm through resulting job eliminations and shifting of entry-level jobs from lower-skilled workers to higher-skilled workers, resulting in higher unemployment and higher costs to business.

The Bellevue Chamber will protect and improve members' bottom lines by working to advance legislation in alignment with these priorities.



Joint Chambers' of Commerce Statement In Support of the Balanced Budget Amendment

Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Greater Omaha Chamber
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

The Nebraska, Lincoln and Greater Omaha Chambers of Commerce are united in support of enactment of a federal Balanced Budget Amendment.

The recent debt limit debate highlights the urgent need to find a way of requiring the federal government to make hard choices required to live within its means. The following facts from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce illustrate the gravity of the situation:

- If left unchecked, the nation's fiscal woes will discourage private investment, stall economic growth and job creation, lower our standard of living, and cause a serious decline in U.S. competitiveness;
- The primary focus of a long-term debt reduction plan should be on curbing excessive spending, both discretionary and mandatory, since more than 55% of federal outlays are mandatory expenditures;
- According to the Congressional Research Service, in FY2010, the last completed fiscal year, the U.S. government spent \$3.456 trillion (23.8% of GDP) and collected \$2.162 trillion in revenue (14.9% of GDP), resulting in a budget deficit of \$1.294 trillion (8.9% of GDP). This type of fiscal management is unsustainable in both the business world and the sphere of government.

Nebraska and most other states across our great country live within the reasonable spending and revenue restraints of balanced budget provisions, and we believe the federal government should too.

We urge Nebraska's Senator Ben Nelson, Senator Mike Johanns, Representative Lee Terry, Representative Jeff Fortenberry and Representative Adrian Smith to co-sponsor, support, advocate for and do everything in their power to bring about passage of the Balanced Budget Amendment.

Wendy Birdsall, CCE, IOM
President
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

Barry Kennedy, CAE, IOM
President
Nebraska Chamber of
Commerce & Industry

David G. Brown
President and CEO
Greater Omaha Chamber

notes~

issues~

REGULATORY REFORM



U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC
20062
202.463.5300
uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for
Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com

Each year federal agencies issue approximately 4,000 new regulations at an annual cost of nearly \$1.1 trillion. This amount is roughly equivalent to all U.S. individual and corporate income taxes paid annually and represents a huge hidden tax on the American public.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce believes that the federal regulatory system must be operated in an open and transparent manner and that regulations should be based on sound, objective science. Furthermore, regulations should undergo rigorous technical analysis to ensure that they are cost-effective, flexible, and minimize regulatory burdens on business.


Cost-Benefit Analysis and Regulatory Accounting

Objective

Ensure that federal agencies conduct a reliable cost-benefit analysis of all proposed regulations, and ensure that the federal government provides a detailed annual accounting of the costs and benefits of all regulations.

Summary of the Issue

Each year federal agencies issue approximately 4,000 new regulations. The annual cost of federal regulations is estimated to be \$1.1 trillion. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports the use of cost-benefit analyses by federal agencies so the public can assess the likely impact of regulatory proposals, establish priorities, consider alternatives, and target resources to those activities that will most effectively use public resources to achieve the maximum protection



of human health and the environment. Executive Order 12866 requires federal agencies to prepare cost-benefit analyses for all significant regulatory actions. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has issued cost-benefit guidelines that instruct agencies about how to prepare these analyses. While the guidelines are detailed and comprehensive, agency compliance has been sporadic and mixed to date. In addition, further improvements in agency analysis and cross-agency consistency are needed before these documents can be truly valuable to the public.

The U.S. Chamber also supports the development of a detailed annual accounting of the costs and benefits of all regulations. OMB has attempted to develop such an accounting for the past several years under the Regulatory Right-to-Know Act. While OMB's efforts are commendable, its annual report is deficient in several key areas. First, OMB merely reports an aggregate of costs and benefits as provided by the agencies, rather than conducting its own independent analysis. Second, OMB's figures are based on projected costs and benefits that are never validated once a regulation is actually implemented. Finally, although substantial research has been done in this area in recent years, there is no adequate economic model for conducting a truly dynamic analysis of total regulatory costs and benefits.



**U. S. CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC
20062
202.463.5300
uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for
Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com

Financial Reform Law Hobbling Recovery


by Tom Donohue

Before the most expansive overhaul of our financial regulatory system in decades became law, one of its chief authors, Sen. Chris Dodd, said, "No one will know until this is actually in place how it works." One year later, the real impact of the Dodd-Frank Act largely remains a mystery.

It's a mystery because many of the rules required by the law have yet to be written. Indeed, there are so many new mandated regulations that the bureaucrats can't keep up. Two things we know for certain: The massive law will layer more bureaucracy on top of old regulations, and this "twilight zone" period of uncertainty will restrict capital and hobble the recovery.

Although Dodd-Frank will impact everything from derivatives to capital requirements, one of its most frightening and destabilizing features is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), a new agency that has been granted unprecedented power to regulate consumer financial products and services.

Now, there's nothing wrong with giving consumers greater protection, but overzealous or badly implemented regulations will end up hurting the very consumers the rules were designed to help. Unfortunately, the CFPB's lack of checks and balances and inability to answer basic questions about its plans have businesses bracing for the worst.



The bureau's structure is dangerously unlike any other federal agency. It has total authority to define its jurisdiction and set its budget without oversight from Congress. All of its power is concentrated in a single director. Other agencies, like the Securities and Exchange Commission, are led by bipartisan, multimember commissions, ensuring political and policy balance. There is no such accountability at the CFPB.

The CFPB has been largely silent on critical questions about its operations. Will the bureau prevent Main Street businesses from offering their customers financing? How will it protect small business access to credit, and how it will use its broad and vague mandate to prevent “unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices?”

The almost certain result of this powerful and unaccountable agency is fewer and more expensive credit options for consumers and small businesses. Restrict capital further and make it more expensive and we'll have an even harder time getting our economy out of the ditch.

Congress needs to reform the CFPB to make it more accountable and demand answers to these basic questions through the confirmation process. Ultimately, what's clear about Dodd-Frank one year later is that the law's hastily erected bureaucracy has greatly expanded the role of government and is creating uncertainty, posing a serious threat to our economic recovery.

Tom Donohue's commentary appears every Tuesday in the Washington Examiner and the Weekly Standard. You can also read it at www.uschambermagazine.com.

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NLRB & DOL REGULATIONS



U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC
20062
202.463.5300
uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for
Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com

Thanks to strong opposition from the business community, the “card check” bill did not pass the U.S. Senate in either 2009 or 2010. Also known as the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), card check would have permitted the establishment of new unions based solely on signatures of a company’s employees, without holding a secret-ballot election. Also, it would have mandated federal arbitration at private business places.

With Republicans in control of the House, the card check bill appears dead for the time being. But the Obama administration is using the regulatory process to tilt the playing field in the favor of labor unions. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and Department of Labor (DOL) have recently proposed and implemented policies that would mirror the goals of the card check bill.

The NLRB has:

- Proposed a rule that dramatically shortens the election window during union organizing campaigns to as little as 10 days. Under the proposal, a union would have months to give workers their side of the story without employers being given formal notice that an organizing drive was underway. Unions then could spring an “ambush election” at a time of their choosing. Employers would then have a small window to try and get balanced information to workers before the election took place.
- Proposed to revise the guidelines on bargaining unit composition, to make it easier to organize small groups of employees spread over

a large hospital or corporate campus. This, in conjunction with the expedited election process, would make it much more complicated for employers to communicate with employees about the disadvantage of unionizing.

- Taken legal action against Boeing for opening a new production line for its 787 airplane in South Carolina, a right-to-work state. The NLRB wants a judge to order Boeing to return all 787 assembly work to Washington, even though the company has already built a \$750 million South Carolina plant and hired 1,000 new workers there.

DOL has:

- Issued a proposed rule to discourage employers from seeking legal advice and consultation relating to union issues. Since most employers are not experts on labor law, they typically seek such help to avoid violating the law. By redefining the meaning of the word "advice," DOL intends to make almost all of these consultations trigger onerous financial disclosure requirements that must be released publicly. Ultimately, the DOL rule would deter employers from seeking, and law firms from offering, any advice at all on union issues.

Other harmful rewrites of our nation's employment laws and regulations include:

- Expanding liability and damages under federal employment laws.
- Exposing employers to new liabilities over how they classify their workers.
- Implementing DOL's agency-wide "Plan, Prevent, Protect" program.
- Rigging government contracting procedures to favor organized labor.
- Allowing unions to engage in abusive shareholder activism.
- Mandating that employers implement OSHA-designed comprehensive safety and health programs.
- Requiring employers to post notices about unionizing.
- Instituting off-site, electronic voting for union certifications.

These proposals and others like them are an attempt to circumvent the legislative process and instead ram through sweeping pro-union policies without Congressional input. At a time when employers need to focus on job growth, the last thing that federal agencies should be doing is rigging the union organizing rules against them.

**U. S. CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC
20062
202.463.5300
uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for
Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com

Taxes: Who Pays?

May 01, 2011

Martin Regalia
Senior Vice President and Chief
Economist

Last month, we took a first look at some of the tax change proposals from the administration's budget. If we are going to get serious about tax reform, we had better understand the basics and not just the baloney sometimes printed in the press. So I thought that it may be a good idea this month, with Tax Day fresh in the rearview mirror, to examine just how much the federal government collects and from whom it collects it.

This past recession highlighted the cyclical nature of government revenues. Prior to the recession, which began in December 2007, the government's tax take had risen to just under \$2.6 trillion in FY 2007 but then fell dramatically, reaching a low of \$2.1 trillion in 2009, before rising just a tiny bit in 2010. As a share of GDP, revenues declined from 18.5% in 2007 to just 14.9% in both 2009 and 2010, the lowest share since 1950. According to the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO's) Preliminary Analysis of the President's Budget for 2012, revenues are projected to grow fairly steadily to almost \$4.6 trillion (19.3% of GDP) by 2021.

The sources of federal revenue in order of magnitude are individual income taxes, social insurance (i.e., payroll) taxes, corporate income taxes, other taxes (such as estate and gift taxes, customs duties, and other fees and fines), and excise taxes.

Individual Income Taxes

Individual income taxes were a record \$1.16 trillion in 2007 (8.4% of GDP), but they dropped the next year as the recession deepened and plunged to only \$915 billion in 2009 (6.5% of GDP). Revenues from individual income taxes continued to drift down in 2010 to \$898 billion, about 6.2% of GDP. With the recession officially ending in mid-2009 and the economy beginning to pick up steam and create more jobs and greater income, individual income taxes are expected to increase over the next few years.

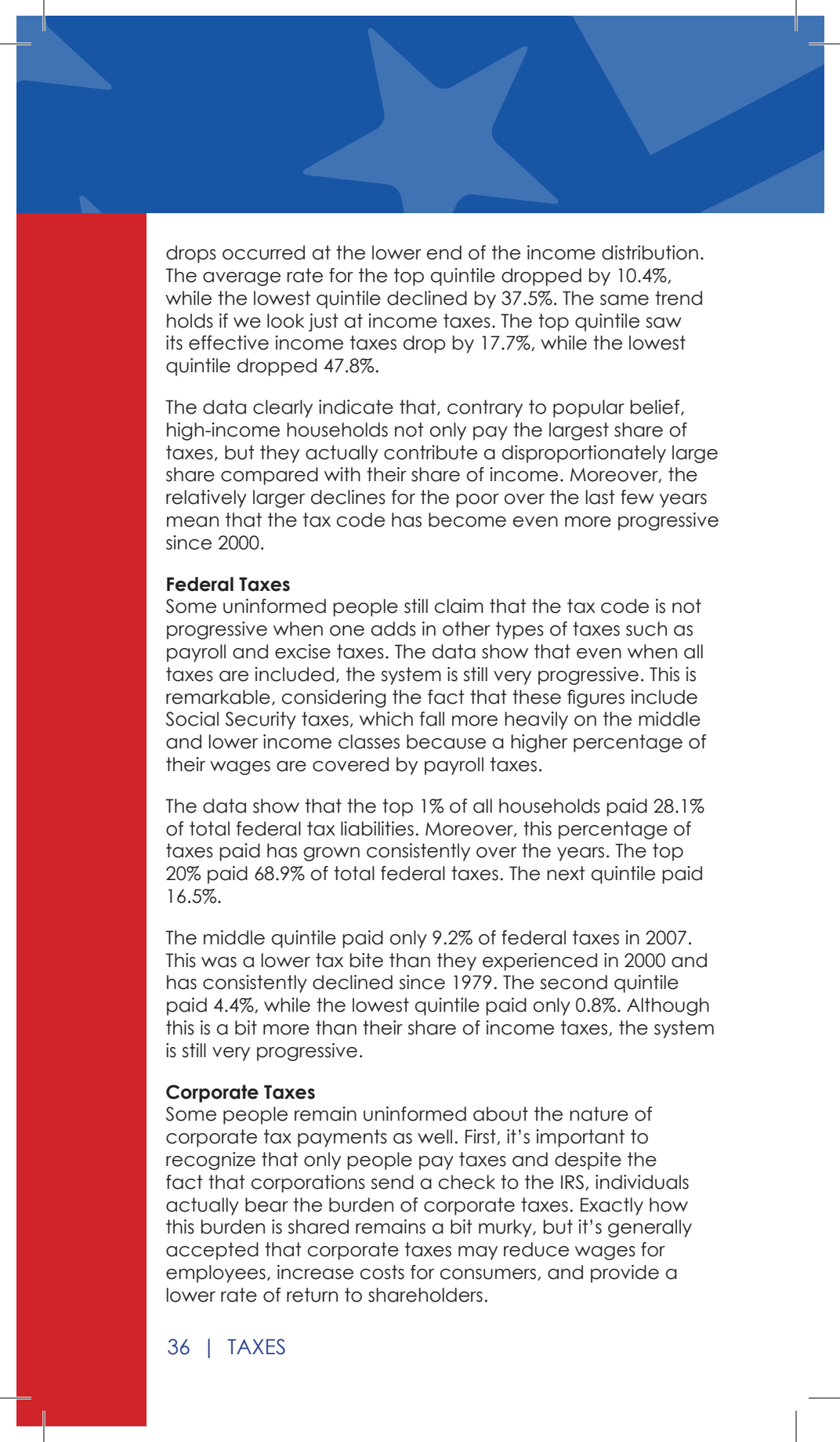
There is a common misperception that the burden of the income tax is borne by the middle and lower classes and that the “rich” don't pay their “fair” share. However, the tax distribution tables tell a much different story and show a highly progressive tax system.

According to the CBO report *Average Federal Tax Rates in 2007* (the latest data available), the higher income groups have consistently paid a disproportionately large share of the tax bill. The data show that the top 1% of all households paid 39.5% of total federal income tax while earning 19.4% of total income in the economy. The top 20% paid 86% of total income taxes while earning 55.9% of total income. The next quintile paid 12.7% of income while earning 19.3% of total income.

In contrast, the middle quintile paid only 4.6% of federal income taxes in 2007 on an income share of 13.1%. The second lowest quintile paid a negative 0.3%, that is, they actually got money back from the government. Their income share was 8.4%. The lowest quintile also had a negative tax liability of 3% and an income share of 4%. Thus, it is easy to see that our current tax code is highly progressive, and that the higher income groups actually pay more than their “fair” share.

The CBO report also shows that the individual income tax—the largest source of federal revenues—has gotten sharply more progressive over the past 30 years. In fact, the CBO data show that since 1979, not only have the income tax shares of the lower four quintiles continued to drop, but the lowest quintile has been in the negative since 1987 and the second lowest has been in the negative since 2002. This means that the lowest 40% have no federal income tax liability and actually get subsidized by the government through refundable tax credits and other incentives.

To put this in perspective, we can look at effective tax rates. The effective rates on all federal taxes in 2007 were lower than in 2000 for all income groups. However, the biggest percentage



drops occurred at the lower end of the income distribution. The average rate for the top quintile dropped by 10.4%, while the lowest quintile declined by 37.5%. The same trend holds if we look just at income taxes. The top quintile saw its effective income taxes drop by 17.7%, while the lowest quintile dropped 47.8%.

The data clearly indicate that, contrary to popular belief, high-income households not only pay the largest share of taxes, but they actually contribute a disproportionately large share compared with their share of income. Moreover, the relatively larger declines for the poor over the last few years mean that the tax code has become even more progressive since 2000.

Federal Taxes


Some uninformed people still claim that the tax code is not progressive when one adds in other types of taxes such as payroll and excise taxes. The data show that even when all taxes are included, the system is still very progressive. This is remarkable, considering the fact that these figures include Social Security taxes, which fall more heavily on the middle and lower income classes because a higher percentage of their wages are covered by payroll taxes.

The data show that the top 1% of all households paid 28.1% of total federal tax liabilities. Moreover, this percentage of taxes paid has grown consistently over the years. The top 20% paid 68.9% of total federal taxes. The next quintile paid 16.5%.

The middle quintile paid only 9.2% of federal taxes in 2007. This was a lower tax bite than they experienced in 2000 and has consistently declined since 1979. The second quintile paid 4.4%, while the lowest quintile paid only 0.8%. Although this is a bit more than their share of income taxes, the system is still very progressive.

Corporate Taxes

Some people remain uninformed about the nature of corporate tax payments as well. First, it's important to recognize that only people pay taxes and despite the fact that corporations send a check to the IRS, individuals actually bear the burden of corporate taxes. Exactly how this burden is shared remains a bit murky, but it's generally accepted that corporate taxes may reduce wages for employees, increase costs for consumers, and provide a lower rate of return to shareholders.



Just as the recession lowered the government's take from individuals, corporate income dropped from a record \$370 billion in 2007 (2.7% of GDP) to \$304 billion the next year. In 2009, revenues from corporate taxes fell to \$138 billion. Revenues turned up again in 2010 to \$191 billion and are projected to exceed historic norms over the next few years.

As for whether corporations pay their “fair” share, it is true that their share of total tax revenues dropped significantly during the recession. That's to be expected, however, since many corporations had no profits during this time. As a percentage of federal revenues, corporate income taxes for 2006 and 2007 represented 14.7% and 14.4% of the total, respectively—the highest shares since 1978—and higher than at any time during the Clinton years. They dropped to only 6.6% in 2009 but have been trending up since.

Although the facts are clear, the general public seems blissfully ignorant of them. Moreover, the press and some members of Congress and the administration continue to misinform about and demagogue the issue. If we are going to have a reasoned debate about debt, deficits, and tax reform, then we owe it to ourselves to start with the facts.

issues~

TRANSPORTATION



U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC
20062
202.463.5300
uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for
Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com


America's transportation and infrastructure system, once a marvel of the modern world, has been stretched beyond its capacity and has fallen into disrepair. A decaying transportation system costs our economy more than \$78 billion annually in lost time and fuel. The U.S. Chamber advocates for a comprehensive approach to solving the nation's looming transportation infrastructure crisis. Specifically, the U.S. Chamber believes that a multi-modal and intermodal vision must increase capacity, reduce congestion, and improve the efficient, safe, sustainable movement of goods and people throughout the country and world.

The Chamber is in a unique position to demonstrate the fundamental link between the maintenance and improvement of our nation's transportation infrastructure and the health of our economy. More importantly, the Chamber is taking that message to key policymakers on Capitol Hill and the public. We will continue mobilize our grassroots network to ensure the business community is an active participant in the coming debates on the transportation infrastructure crisis and leads the way to comprehensive solutions.

U.S. Chamber Position

A major focus of the Chamber — along with our coalition Americans for Transportation Mobility — is ensuring Congress and the administration continue to meet the commitments made through SAFETEA-LU, and preparing for the challenges that the next surface transportation reauthorization will pose.

SAFETEA-LU utilizes all available revenues projected to be collected by the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) through fiscal year 2009 for surface transportation improvements. However, recent budget projections by the administration and Congressional Budget Office show that the HTF have a negative \$4.3 billion balance in fiscal year 2009. The Chamber believes that Congress should ensure that HTF revenues are sufficient to support the guaranteed funding levels



in SAFETEA-LU and Congress should not cut the obligation limitation for the federal-aid Highway Program in order to achieve HTF solvency. The Chamber supports Highway Trust Fund solvency proposals including, but not limited to, the following:

- Reimbursing the Highway Trust Fund for emergency expenditures paid out of the fund since 1998.
- Restructuring current fuel tax exemptions and the refunds provided to state and local governments to be General Fund supported activities in a manner that holds current exemption recipients harmless.
- Implementing additional mechanisms to further crack down on fuel tax evasion.
- Ensuring that all federal revenues generated from the use of highway infrastructure are deposited into the Highway Trust Fund.

We will continue to mobilize our grassroots to ensure that the nation's transportation system is fully funded and meets the business community's needs. The Chamber continues to work on measures to reduce unnecessary government red tape that delays the completion of transportation projects.

policy contacts~

BELLEVUE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1102 Galvin Rd. South
Bellevue, NE 68005
www.BellevueNebraska.com

Megan A. Lucas, IOM

President & CEO
402.898.3000 - office
402.657.6465 - cell
402.291.8729 - fax

LINCOLN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1135 M Street, Suite 200
Lincoln, NE 68508
402.436.2350
www.LCOC.com

Wendy Birdsall, CCE, IOM

President
402.436.2350
wbirdsall@LCOC.com

Bruce Bohrer, IOM

Executive Vice President & General Counsel
402.436.2358 - direct line
402.430.2358 - cell
bbohrer@LCOC.com

Kyle Fischer

Public Policy Specialist
402.436.2352 - direct line
kfischer@LCOC.com

NEBRASKA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

1320 Lincoln Mall, Suite 201
Lincoln, NE 68509
www.nechamber.com

Barry L. Kennedy, CAE, IOM

President
402.474.4422 - office
402.474.5681 - fax
bkennedy@nechamber.com

Jamie T. Karl

Vice President - Public Affairs & Policy
402.474.4422 - office
402.474.5681 - fax
jkarl@nechamber.com

GREATER OMAHA CHAMBER

1301 Harney St.
Omaha, NE 68102
402.346.5000
402.346.7050 - fax
www.omahachamber.org

David G. Brown

President and CEO
402.346.5000
dbrown@omahachamber.org

Wendy Boyer

Vice President, Community Affairs
402.346.5000
wboyer@omahachamber.org

Tim Stuart

Legislative Counsel
Lincoln Office
402.474.4960
tstuart@omahachamber.org

Joseph Young

Director of Public Policy
Lincoln Office
402.474.4960
jyoung@omahachamber.org

U. S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE


1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062
202.463.5300
www.uschamber.com

Doug Loon

Vice President for Regional Affairs
952.832.9151
dloon@uschamber.com



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NEBRASKA
YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS

LEGISLATIVE
SUMMIT

agenda~

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

1:00 PM

GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

ConAgra Theater

David Heineman, *Governor
State of Nebraska*

1:30 PM

PANEL OF YOUNG ELECTED LEADERS

Speaker Mike Flood, *District 19*
Senator Danielle Conrad, *District 46*
Senator Tony Fulton, *District 29*
Senator Heath Mello, *District 5*
Senator Beau McCoy, *District 39*

Q &A to follow -
moderated by Lincoln Young Professionals

3:00 PM

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yp contacts~

Bellevue Young Professionals Group

Matt Showalter
402.898.3000
Matt@BellevueNebraska.com
www.BellevueYP.com
Find us: facebook.com/BellevueYP

Lincoln Young Professionals Group

Jaime Henning, IOM
402.436.2366
jaimehenning@lcoc.com
www.lincolnypg.com
Find us: facebook.com/lincolnypg

Greater Omaha Young Professionals

Sarah A. Johnson
p: 402.978.7945
sjohnson@omahachamber.org
www.omahayoungprofessionals.org
Find us: facebook.com/omahayp

Connecting Young Nebraskans (CYN)

Kayla Churchill Schnuelle
University of Nebraska Rural Initiative
Marketing Communications Associate
402.472.2935
kschnuelle2@unl.edu
<http://cyn.nebraska.edu/-cyn/-cyn.html>
Find us: facebook.com/youngnebraskans

bios~

YOUNG ELECTED LEADERS PANEL



District 19
Room #2103
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
402.471.2929
mflood@leg.ne.gov

Sen. Mike Flood

Speaker of the Legislature

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2004;
re-elected 2008

Education: Graduate of University of
Notre Dame (B.A.), 1997; University of
Nebraska-Lincoln (J.D.), 2001.

Occupation: Broadcaster/lawyer.

Member: Board member, Norfolk Rotary
Club (president); sponsor, Norfolk Youth
Leadership Council; board member,
Nebraska/Madison County Bar
Association; admitted to practice, U.S.
District Court – District of Nebraska.



District 05
Room #1206
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
402.471.2710
hmello@leg.ne.gov

Sen. Heath Mello

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2008

Education: Graduate of University
of Nebraska-Lincoln (B.A. in political
science), 2002.

Occupation: Community affairs and
development specialist.

Member: Board, South Omaha
Neighborhood Alliance; board, One
World Community Health Center;
board, Bellevue Community Police
Foundation; board, Q Merchants
Association; board, South Omaha
Development Project; board, Nebraska
Financial Education Coalition; South
Omaha Business Association; South
Omaha Optimists; South Omaha
Environmental Task Force; South
Omaha Weed & Seed; Greater Omaha
Chamber of Commerce; Bellevue
Chamber of Commerce; Sarpy County
Chamber of Commerce; Young Elected
Officials Network; National Caucus of
Environmental Legislators; St. Thomas
More Parish; Knights of Columbus.

Sen. Tony Fulton

Appointed to Nebraska Legislature: Jan. 3, 2007, to replace Mike Foley, who resigned; elected to Legislature 2008

Education: Graduate of Auburn Senior High, 1990; University of Nebraska-Lincoln (B.S. in mechanical engineering), 1997; attended Kansas Newman University, Wichita, Kan. (philosophy); attended Mount St. Mary's University, Emmitsburg, M.D. (theology).

Occupation: CEO, Guardian Angels Homecare; professional engineer.

Member: Public Policy Committee, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce; founding committee, Lincoln Caregiver Education Group; Better Business Bureau; Lincoln Independent Business Association; St. Peter's Catholic Church (director, Godparent Catechesis; Youth Ministry Board; Godparent weekly youth group leader); Knights of Columbus (first degree member); American Society of Mechanical Engineers.



District 29
Room #2107
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
402.471.2734
tfulton@leg.ne.gov

Sen. Danielle Conrad

Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2006; re-elected 2010

Education: Graduate of University of Nebraska (B.A.), 2000; University of Nebraska College of Law (J.D.), 2003.

Occupation: Attorney.

Member: Nebraska Bar Association; Lincoln Bar Association.



District 46
Room #1008
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
402.471.2720
dconrad@leg.ne.gov

bios~
YOUNG ELECTED
LEADERS PANEL



Sen. Beau McCoy

Education: Graduate of Bellevue University (B.A.), 2007.

Occupation: Home improvement contractor, business owner.

Former: Project coordinator.

Member: Young Republicans of Omaha; Nebraska Federation of Young Republicans (national committeeman); Westside Church.

District 39
Room #1522
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509
402.471.2885
bmccoy@leg.ne.gov

notes~

issues~

TALENT & INNOVATION INITIATIVE

One of the most important accomplishments of the recently concluded legislative session was the passage of several bills focused on creating new momentum for developing and attracting businesses rooted in technology and innovation—Talent and Innovation Initiative. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development is preparing to implement these programs, and additional information on each bill will be posted as it becomes available.

INTERN NEBRASKA PROGRAM (LB 386)

www.InternNE.com

Creates new internship opportunities for college and university students to gain job experience working with companies across the state. The program went into effect on June 1. Program information and applications can be found at www.InternNE.com.

View Bill

www.nebraskalegislature.gov/bills

BUSINESS INNOVATION ACT (LB 387)

Provides funding to help businesses develop new technologies that lead to quality job opportunities across the state. Competitive grants will provide funding and technical assistance for research at Nebraska institutions, new product development and testing, and help expand small business and entrepreneur outreach efforts. The program will go into effect on October 1st. LB 387

View Bill

www.nebraskalegislature.gov/bills

SITE AND BUILDING DEVELOPMENT FUND (LB 388)

Increase industrial and commercial sites available and ready for business development. The program will go into effect on October 1st. LB388

View Bill

www.nebraskalegislature.gov/bills

ANGEL INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT (LB 389)

Encourages investment in high-tech and other startup Nebraska enterprises by helping attract private funding. The tax credit is refundable and available to a wide range of industries making Nebraska's Angel Investment Tax Credit one of the most competitive in the nation. The program will go into effect on September 1st. LB 389

View Bill

www.nebraskalegislature.gov/bills

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Richard Baier, Director
301 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94666
Lincoln, NE 68509-4666

www.neded.org

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