

107TH LEGISLATURE SPECIAL REDISTRICTING SESSION

Fall is my favorite time of the year. Not only is the foliage changing into beautiful colors, but the fields are getting ready to be harvested. I love seeing children anxious to get home from school so they can help with the chores and be the first one to jump on the combine or tractor to help grandpa and daddy harvest the crops. In September we celebrated Farm Safety and Health Week. Living in an agricultural community, we know that farm safety needs to be shifted into high gear throughout the entire Harvest season. Please be very careful to slow down for machinery on the roads, especially when traveling over hilly areas where you can come upon someone rather unexpectedly. Also, with long hours in the field, take care to get plenty of rest and eat a good diet so you can stay healthy and alert throughout the day. I wish everyone a safe and bountiful harvest.

REDISTRICTING FINALIZED

Redistricting in Nebraska is complete and Governor Pete Ricketts has signed off on the final versions. What does that mean to Legislative District 17?

Legislative District 17 (LD17) grew with the addition of Wakefield and Emerson moving into the District from Dixon County to make those communities whole. For those who are familiar with Highway 35 coming from Emerson towards Wakefield if you continue to drive straight west along the country gravel road at the junction of Highway 35/9 this area would fill the cavity seen on the 2011 redistricting map. The population of the redesigned LD17 is 40,122.

Congressional District 3 (CD3) grew also with the addition of the following counties: Washington, Burt, Thurston, Otoe and western Polk. Making CD3 made up of 79.5 counties out of 93. Congressman Adrian Smith will continue as representative of CD3, which now includes Thurston County in Legislative District 17.

Public Service Commission D4 keeps Legislative District 17 in the same district noting that Washington and Adams counties were added and Webster, Wheeler, Greeley, and Howard counties are now in District 5. Rod Johnson is the District 4 voting member of the Commission.

Supreme Court Judicial District 3 keeps Legislative District 17; however Platte and Colfax counties moved into District 5. Justice William B. Cassel is the District 3 Justice.

Board of Regents District 3 keeps Legislative District 17 in place but loses Knox and Pierce counties and adds Polk, Butler and Saunders counties. Jim Pillen is the District 3 voting member of the Board.

State Board of Education has considerable change. Legislative District 17 was in District 3 at the 2011 redistricting; however, it is in District 6. District 6 through the 2021 redistricting map now consists of Thurston, Dakota, Dixon, Cedar, Wayne, Knox, Pierce, Antelope, Wheeler, Boone, Greeley, Nance, Howard, Merrick, Buffalo, Hall and Adams

counties. Maureen Nickels is the District 6 voting member of the Board.

REVENUE COMMITTEE INTERIM HEARING

I continue to serve on the Revenue Committee. We had the opportunity to hold a special Interim Hearing on LR 261 directly following the Redistricting Session this week. The purpose of the interim study was to examine the structure and administration of and compliance with Nebraska's Individual and Corporate Income Taxes, Financial Institutions and Insurance Premiums Taxes, State and Local Sales and Use Taxes, Real and Personal Property Taxes, as well as other taxes. We invited 17 Nebraska based organizations to share their unique perspectives on tax reform in our state.

For the purposes of the study, we were provided the following information on Nebraska's tax situation as it ranks nationally. The information came from The Tax Foundation.

- Nebraska ranks #14 for overall total tax burden for a resident at 9.01%.
- Nebraska ranks #10 for property tax burden at 3.77%.
- Nebraska ranks #26 for individual tax burden at 2.30%.
- Nebraska ranks #36 for total sales and excise tax burden at 2.94%.
- Individual income tax rates in Nebraska are 6.84%.
- Nebraska ranks #29 for combined state & average local sales tax rates at 6.94%.
- Nebraska ranked #7 in 2019 for property taxes at 1.54%.

BELLS ACROSS AMERICA

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the Dakota City Fire Department's "Bells Across America" service to remember fallen firefighters, Captain Andy Zalme, Captain Eric Speck, and Firefighter Lowell Satterwhite. No words can convey our deep appreciation of these local heroes. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten.

NEBRASKA ECONOMIC TAX CREDIT IN DISTRICT 17

I greatly appreciate the hospitality of the Darling family hosting myself and the History Nebraska staff for a tour of The Palace Hotel. What a delight to see the extensive renovation work being done. While we were in town, the Nebraska History staff and I also drove to Walthill to admire the progress taking place at the historic Susan La Flesche Picotte Hospital. I look forward to seeing the positive impact the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit has on the communities of Pender and Walthill for decades to come.

WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

I was excited to hear that the Class of 2025 at Wayne State College is one of the largest Freshman classes in the College's history totalling 801 students. Wayne State's headcount increased by 384 students over 2020, with significant gains in degree-seeking students. Wayne State has also made substantial headway in its 4-year graduation rate for undergraduates, which has grown by 3.5%. The College also experienced a considerable increase in graduate students (8.6%), the largest increase in over 30 years. Congratulations Wayne State College, we are proud to have you in District 17.

If you have any comments or concerns, please contact me at 402-471-2716 or

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