



DISTRICT 23

WHAT THE CANDIDATES SAID ABOUT THE BUDGETS THEY BUILT

	Chris Langemeier	Mark Gustafson
PUBLIC SCHOOLS	If we truly can reduce the administration (by consolidating school districts) then that's a good issue. But I think it's crucial that that decision be made at a local level versus the state mandating it.	I don't think (the current level of aid) is sufficient. But I think that's still relies too heavily on property tax—local property taxes. It's not just property owners that benefit. It's society as a whole. I mean we do a good job educating our kids here in Nebraska and a lot of them end up taking jobs elsewhere. So those locales are who benefits.
UNIVERSITY & STATE COLLEGES	The key thing that the University needs to stay with the land grant university that it was created under in meeting the needs of the state of Nebraska. The University's per cent of the budget is decreasing although their actual dollars are increasing.	I'm a strong supporter of the university because of I think that that's a critical entity in economic development for the state. It's not wise to cut them now and down the road find out that you're not—that that was a mistake. I'm not sure about how many (state college) campuses we need in that two-tiered system. But I don't think every state college that we have needs to be a University with a research (mission).
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES	There's going to be a lot of concern in there where you're spending seven dollars in administration to administrate 12 dollars in (the budget game) numbers here. It's a lot more dollars in that in the state budget. Unfortunately, that is an area where one on one contact is a must to make it work.	Did not address
STATE PATROL, COURTS, & PRISONS	In recent history they talked about closing some (correctional) facilities. But unfortunately when you talk about closing that's kind of a nice key word, buzz word to talk about saving some dollars. Let's close prisons. Unfortunately that sets a whole perimeter of guidelines that need to be set is what inmates then get released.	People are starting to talk about other ways of (punishing the guilty) besides locking people up, especially with the non-violent crimes. And I think you look to other places that have been doing things differently for awhile and if it works. If that saves the state a lot of money and the results are as good as locking them up, I think we should—we need to look seriously at that.
MEDICAID	Medicaid is growing at an astronomical rate and if we can look at and I think this is maybe one of the focal points to start with Medicaid and look at options through nursing home insurance deductions to try and curb that off 10, 15 years from now to get that growth reduced. I think it's a focus area we have to look at.	There are going to be people in this district that would like to see those entitlements funded at a much higher level and there are other people in this district that probably feel that those should be drastically cut. I'm not an expert, you know, in understanding all that is involved and what can be expected if you drastically change those things.

AID TO POOR & DISABLED	We have to look at the expansion and the growth of these programs. There may be opportunities to switch the funding from different areas ...to take people that may be getting some public assistance and give them some options to get off public assistance and make their lives better.	Did not address
AID TO CITIES, COUNTIES & COMM. COLLEGES	I think you have to scrutinize all the areas. I don't think there's any area that you can just say should not be looked at. As our community colleges we're getting a lot of students across the state participating in community colleges. That may be part of the reason the University's enrollment is down a little bit. But they're providing a good service across the state.	I'm not going to be very supportive of un-funded mandates (on local governments) if I get down there (to the Legislature). If those legislators think something is important enough to do that they impose it on entities, local governments below, then they ought to fund it because they have the biggest resource space to tap into.
41 SMALLER STATE AGENCIES	We do have to look at long-term and I'm afraid a lot of people don't do that. Is we have to look at the long-term growth of all these programs.	I have to get down there and look at and find out more about that again. I think there's some duplication in efforts. For example I'm gonna just guess that we may have ten or more agencies that are publicly funded that are working on rural development. And none of them are very well funded. I think there maybe should just be one agency within the state government and something within a university that's collaborating with the state. I think there are probably examples in other areas as well.
PROPERTY, SALES & INCOME TAXES	As taxes keep going up, we need the relief. To say anyone has said we need to cut one and fund the other, no. They're more concerned, and I am too, about small rural town communities surviving, keeping their doors open, keeping businesses, keeping their schools, their hospitals open. They want to look at the rural, the issues that are dealing with, they're dealing with in rural Nebraska and how that's going to remain their quality of life that they've had for years to come.	The way we raise our taxes needs to be looked at because ... the way we tax now, what we tax now, was set up when the economy was very different many years ago and we've moved much more from a goods-based economy to a service-based economy, but we still haven't really addressed that change. I'd like to take a look at that and see if there is a fair way of raising the revenue. My guess is (we) might broaden the income tax a little bit. I'm not sure it could be on the sales tax too.
WHAT WOULD MY PRIORITY BILL BE?	I'm not going to put anything in there. I think it's crucial that all these services are provided to our district as well as the State of Nebraska. Now, at what levels, that's yet to be determined. For me to pick a particular category and say we're taking all the funding out of this portion (of the budget) and putting it into some other is not realistic being one of 49 (senators).	My pet project is the property tax relief thing. I think that's important and I'm going to support funding of education. If the economy gets better, I certainly would be interested in making sure that our education system is funded at a level that we need to ensure our future.