



The Lancaster County Democrat

June 2014

The Lancaster County Democratic Party is your Local Contact for Democratic Politics.

Raise the Wage—Make Hard Work Pay in Nebraska **By State Senator Jeremy Nordquist**

Working hard and taking care of our families are Nebraska values. While Nebraskans place a significant value on hard work, the economy has changed in a way that has left too many Nebraska families behind. Our state consistently has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, yet despite working hard our families are falling behind.

There are 32,000 Nebraskans earning below or at the minimum wage, which currently is at \$7.25 per hour. At this wage level, a worker working 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year, earns \$15,080. This is below the federal poverty line for families of two or more and far below what any family needs to secure a modest living standard in any Nebraska community. According to recent reports, 80.5 percent of children in our state had all available parents in the workforce, yet in 2012 nearly 18 percent of Nebraska children lived in poverty.

This past legislative session, I introduced a bill that would have raised the minimum wage to \$9.00 per hour over a three-year period. The bill failed to advance despite statewide polling showing that nearly 60 percent of Nebraskans favor a minimum wage increase.

Nebraska families cannot afford to wait on lawmakers to act. Given the overwhelming number of Nebraskans who favor a minimum wage increase, groups are coming together to lead a petition effort so Nebraskans can be heard and can vote in favor of a minimum wage increase in the upcoming November election.

This campaign is being led by Nebraskans for Better Wages, which is a broad coalition of working men and women, educators, child advocates, business owners and faith leaders who understand the issues Nebraska families face.

Every day dozens of petitioners are getting signatures statewide and we encourage more Nebraskans to get

involved by becoming a paid circulator, volunteering to gather signatures or making a contribution to the effort.

We are running out of excuses not to raise the minimum wage; it will help families, create jobs and boost communities and the entire economy. To learn more or get involved, go to BetterWagesNebraska.com or you can call 402.513.3693 (Omaha) or 402.325.1350 (Lincoln). We need to join together and make hard work pay in Nebraska!



Meet Our Candidates



June 2014

Lancaster County Democrats,

Congratulations on a successful county convention! My campaign continues to grow, thanks to your support and the support of other county parties across the state.

I was very pleased with the number of votes I received in the primary election, especially given that I was running unopposed. I received 7,000 more votes than my opponent, Pete Ricketts, did in his primary, where he received the lowest number of votes to win the primary in 100 years. Three in four Republican voters who cast ballots in their primary election voted for another candidate, and a county-by-county analysis shows that Ricketts remains weak in rural Nebraska. Polling conducted following the primary shows that this race is very competitive. In short – we've got a real shot at winning in November. But only if I can count on your continued support throughout the summer.

Volunteers across the state are keeping busy this summer with canvassing, phone calls, and supporting Better Wages Nebraska to get the petition to raise the minimum wage on the ballot in November. My wife, sons, and I all recently signed the petition ourselves. If you haven't done so yet, be sure to visit our office in Lincoln (located at 135 Lakewood Drive) very soon to add your name.

By signing the petition, you're adding your name in support of raising the minimum wage to \$9 per hour over the next two years -- from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.00 in 2015 and then to \$9.00 in 2016.

Consider this: an employee who works 40 hours a week for 52 weeks for \$7.25 per hour only earns \$15,080 per year. That's below the federal poverty line for families of two or more. The 32,000 workers in our state who earn minimum wage deserve better. Nebraskans who work hard every day deserve to earn a living wage.

Raising the minimum wage will reduce poverty, reduce employment turnover, and increase consumer spending -- that's good for workers, employers, and our economy.

Thanks so much for your continued support. Let's work together to raise the wage in Nebraska, and win my election in November. Together we can do this!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Hassebrook".

Chuck Hassebrook
Democratic Candidate for Governor of Nebraska



Chuck Hassebrook Signing the Minimum Wage Petition

Meet Our Candidates



Pronounced Differences

My responsibilities as the Democratic Party's nominee for the United States Senate do not require partisanship. They do require that I define differences between my adversary and me. These differences, not party identification, provide a choice for voters.



Perhaps never before in recent history have the differences between candidates for the United States Senate in Nebraska been so significant. My goal is to be a reasonable, responsible, thoughtful public servant. My adversary wants to cut government so deeply as to cause the United States to breach faith with its citizens.

Consider these differences:

Social Security; Medicare

I am committed to fulfilling the promise of the United States to pay Social Security benefits, including COLAs, maintaining the qualifications age, and not modifying benefits for those who made significant contributions to the system, whether they now receive benefits or not.

Where a citizen, relying upon a law enacted through the democratic process, albeit by a previous administration, has made life changing decisions based upon the law and is not in a position to recover from those decisions if the law changes, the United States should not breach faith with its reliant people.

I am committed to maintaining and preserving Social Security. I will do everything possible to prevent it from becoming a voucher system.

I am not willing to privatize Social Security and turn Medicare into a voucher system. My adversary wants to limit benefits with a voucher system. This would cut off benefits. Contrary to what my adversary wants, Wall Street managers will not do better for the American people. They brought us the bank failures of 2008-09. Too big to fail and to jail must not be rewarded by control of the Social Security funds!

Social Security funding problems are driven, in large measure, by Wall Street's misdeeds of the past. The banking crisis gave us low interest rates. This dramatically diminished earnings of the Social Security Trust funds and put pressures on the funds because their earnings were cut. Bad banking caused this, not bad management by the Trust fund Trustees.

Contributions to Social Security declined because jobs were outsourced, and when good jobs left, remaining jobs paid less. This reduced payroll taxes and cut contributions to Social Security at the same time that the pool of beneficiaries was growing as baby boomers retire. The people who brought us the 2008 banking crisis also support the tax loophole system that expatriates American jobs and keeps them overseas.

Wall Street cannot be trusted, and the unchecked marketplace does not work—not with something as big and fundamental as Social Security and Medicare. My opponent and I have a fundamental disagreement on these points related to Social Security and Medicare.

Veterans Benefits

This does not end the stark differences between my opponent and me. In fact, it barely scratches the surface.

The Republican Senate nominee supports the Paul Ryan budget. It cuts Veterans benefits, including pensions. What could be more contrary to the oath of office taken by a United States Senator than to support a change in the law that breaks faith with America's retired fighting forces? Exempting current retirees—a recent iteration of my opponent—does not show consistency, insight, or commitment to honoring the Nation's commitment to Veterans.

I support aggressive investigation of recent heart-rending revelations that Vets have been delayed and denied needed health care by Veterans' Administration scheduling personnel and administrators. These revelations should be distinguished from health care; it appears to be administrators, not health care providers, who are the problem.

Investigation, and prosecution of wrongdoers is step one. The critical final step is to get all cultural and mechanical problems at the VA fixed, and to make the system work!

Affordable Health Care

My opponent has pledged, countless times, that he will personally "repeal Obamacare." This talk has been

called by US Senator John McCain (R AZ) “a fool’s errand.”

If Nebraskans send their new US Senator to Washington knowing he is on a “fool’s errand” on day one, they are likely to have an ineffective Senator for six years. This risk cannot be taken.

Farm Bill

The Republican Party nominated a candidate who accepted large sums of money and appears to have third-party, undisclosed support from organizations diametrically opposed to ever—under any circumstances in the future—enacting another Farm Bill. I know how important a Farm Bill is to Nebraska’s businesses. No life in Nebraska goes untouched by the State’s number one industry: agriculture.

To think of Nebraska having a United States Senator, financed by forces aligned against a Farm Bill, is ludicrous. Election of such a person is as unimaginable as the most coarse and insensitive of decisions anyone has ever made to vote against his or her own best interests.

The Choices

It seems sad to write, but fair to say, that the choices for the United States Senate come down to this. I am a Nebraskan, focused on solutions that are best for the United States and Nebraska, not committed to a partisan agenda, but to a reasonable one, and devoted to making common sense, intelligent legal decisions and enacting thoughtful laws. My adversary is on a different track. So, Nebraskans can either vote for me or vote against what is clearly and overwhelmingly their own best interests—Social Security, Medicare, Vet’s Benefits, Farm Bill, etc.

It is hard to see anything in the Sasse agenda of key issues that is pro-Nebraskan.

I am grateful for support of all friends, family, and faithful. The 2014 race for the US Senate is remarkably important. It may prove to be definitional to Nebraska.

If the State is to progress, it must follow the intelligent model of other states who do well at attracting financial investment from the outside. Nebraska must have a strong, effective voice in the United States Senate.

I aspire to be that voice. My effort is devoted to making the choice available to Nebraskans. Thank you for your help. We need it.

Meet Our Candidates

Dennis Crawford, Candidate for U.S. Congress, District 1



We Must Take Care of Our Veterans

I agree with the resignation of VA Chief Eric Shinseki. However, that is just the starting point for some needed reforms. The VA is suffering from a lack of doctors and health care providers. It’s time for the Congress to spend money to hire more staff. Privatization of the VA system is not the answer. Our veterans are happy with the quality of care at the VA and are opposed to turning it over to the private health insurance industry. As a member of Congress, I will never support the privatization of the VA. I will stand with our veterans. The money to take care of our veterans shouldn’t be held up based upon partisan political considerations or to further a narrow ideological agenda. We must take care of our heroes.

The Watchful Citizen

In case you haven’t discovered the County Party TV show on community access TV, check us out! The show airs on Time-Warner Cable Channel 13, at 10:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, and 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays. We have an interview style format. Guests are Democrats chosen by party leaders, sometimes because they’re politically well-known but occasionally just ordinary citizens who have a message to give their audience.

And check our video archive on Youtube:
www.youtube.com/LancasterCountyDems

Meet Our Candidates

Karen S. Amen, Candidate for Lower Platte South Natural Resource District, Sub-District 6

LPSNRD: Flood Control from the Past to the Future



There's a photograph buried deep in the archives of the *Lincoln Journal* that shows the impact of the floods along Salt Creek in the late spring of 1950. The picture is of my grandfather, H. J. Amen, standing in front of his store, his pant legs rolled up above his knees, and the roiling waters of Salt

Creek swirling midway up his legs.

At the time, I was a very young girl at my home in New York, but my parents brought us back to Lincoln every Christmas for a week and every summer for almost a month. "The Store" was the center of the Germans from Russia neighborhood. Never before had it occurred to me that rising creek waters could lap against the outside walls of that sturdy building.

But Grandpa wasn't willing to wait passively for the next flood. He and a group of like-minded, determined citizens began long-term projects to change Salt Creek's behavior and protect the people living nearby. In 1958 Congress approved the Salt Valley Flood Control project managed by the Salt Valley Watershed District. To paraphrase Margaret Mead, never underestimate what a group of determined citizens can accomplish.

That concept of citizens taking responsibility for their own well-being and that of the natural world around them has echoed down the generations and decades. Salt Valley District eventually was merged into the newly formed Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, formed in 1972, and flood control responsibility was given to LPSNRD's Board and staff.

Once again, the model is based upon local citizens working with all levels of government and a variety of organizations to meet specific goals. I am honored to have been part of that tradition for the past five years as a Board member of LPSNRD. It has been an outstanding experience as I continue to learn, continue to use my knowledge and skills to make the best public policy decisions possible.

In future newsletters, I'll talk more about my priorities and activities. For now, just this thought: The best available science combined with well-managed citizen involvement leads to good public policy.

Columnist

Say It Isn't So: Less than 40 Percent in the General Election of November 2010!

By Rick Boucher

It's a dismal figure. In the May 2010 primary, just 40.25 percent of local registered voters cast ballots and it featured the Arena. Election Commissioner David Shively said 39.99 percent of registered voters cast votes in the November 2010 General Election.

On the upside, it looks as if everyone is taking the 2014

General Election increasingly seriously with Hassebrook for Governor, Domina for U.S. Senate, Ashford v. Terry and Maxwell, Amanda McGill for Auditor, Stewart for Attorney General, Pansing-Brooks for Legislative District 28 and so many more.

Within the last few months, Democrats have made strides in the statewide ground game—county conventions, Get Out The Vote, diversity, volunteers elevating the conversation between neighbor and neighbor, teacher to teacher, union member to member, July 4th celebrations, town socials, parish picnics and more.

The status quo will not do because Nebraskans are ill-served by their government—Medicaid expansion, Beatrice State Development, DHHS, Corrections, tax preferences etc.

Decisive action is needed. To win, will it take 58 percent of registered Democrats to vote, 22 percent of registered Independents to vote Democratic and 8 percent of registered Republicans to vote Democratic? Democrats have to anchor the vote, but Independents need to turn out for Democrats and a handful of Republicans too. If 40 percent of registered voters turnout statewide, will Democrats prevail? It's doubtful. But I don't know. Opportunity is knocking. Will Democrats answer the call? I know that NDP is advancing the cause daily—Powers, Marvin, District Chairs and more, but Vince Powers will admit we have "more progress to make" in terms of an inclusion agenda for *all* Nebraskans to have a "political home."

The five-month countdown starts today. Let's make county conventions a mighty liftoff for victory across the board in November. We have splendid candidates, a diverse and talented roster at NDP, volunteers, and local parties. Now we have to energize our voters to deliver!

Carry on!



LINCOLN CENTRAL LABOR UNION

7th Annual Solidarity Picnic

Saturday, June 14, 2014 (Flag Day)

10:00AM – 2:00PM

Labor Temple – 4625 Y Street

Union members, families & friends welcome!

Food, Fun, and Activities for all!

Games for the kids, raffles and door prizes!

**Hotdogs, Hamburgers, Beans, Salad, Chips, Cookies
and Beverages FREE-WILL donation accepted.**

**Local Unions are invited to recognize and honor
union members with service pins & certificates.**

**For more information contact Frank Eman, Picnic Chair: 402-499-0100 or
The Lincoln Central Labor Union: 402-466-5444**



Run Like the Wind!

Everyone welcome!

Featuring music by
The Bottle Tops
!!!

Sunday, June 22nd
4-6 p.m.

Duggan's Pub | 11th & K Streets

Suggested Donation: \$25 individual, \$40 couple, \$50 family

Sponsored by John & Karen Hansen, Blue Stem Sierra Club, and IBEW Local265

CLEAN, LOW-COST ENERGY
NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

RE-ELECT
Mary
Harding

maryhardingforpppd.com

Join me for food, music
and fun! We'll have
BBQ, beverages and
great music from
The Bottle Tops.
I'm running for
more efficient,
cost-effective
energy options
for all of us.
Thank you!
-Mary



County Party History

L. K. Emry (February. 20, 1911-March. 30, 1992) By Marlene Cupp

Pay a visit to the Lincoln Central Labor Union and you will find a brochure with a picture of L. K. Emry on it that contains information about the Memorial Labor Education Scholarship that is awarded to students from families that are members of recognized Nebraska Labor Unions. The scholarship is given in the name of L. K. Emry.

L.K. was appointed to the Nebraska Legislature by Governor Jim Exon in 1978 to fill a vacated seat. His commitment to legislation that promoted fair and humane treatment of all citizens was a hallmark of his tenure as a State Senator and it reflected his own personal beliefs and behavior.

L.K. was born Louis Knar Emry in Panama, Nebraska in 1911. His home was on a farm and he had to return to that farm from his studies at the University of Nebraska to help support his family when he was needed. L.K. married Norma Gardner and they were the parents of four children: Claudine Ceballos, Kathi Emry Vontz, Mary Emry and Randy Emry.

L.K. worked at the Burlington Rail Yards in Havelock. After a terrible explosion injured him, he discovered how important and valuable union membership was when it compensated him for his medical and personal expenses. From then on L.K. spent his time pursuing fair and decent treatment for American workers. As a member of the International Association of Machinists, he served as secretary and treasurer of the Lincoln Union Labor Council, secretary and treasurer of the Midwest Conference of Machinists as well as offices in other union organizations. He was a two-time winner of the Al Bauer Award for the Labor Leader of the Year award and, in 1993, he was one of the first inductees into the Nebraska Labor Leaders Hall of Fame.

He was a labor lobbyist for twelve years and his reputation for fairness and honesty were the traits that Jim Exon valued when he named L.K. to the Unicameral.

L. K. Emry was a man of integrity and compassion who believed that everyone deserved to be treated fairly and decently. He knew how to fight for those values and he didn't back down from those battles. He was an important player in the Lancaster County Democratic Party and he left a legacy of ideas and values that we all treasure. He believed absolutely that with hard work

and determination we can make the changes that are needed.

If you want to know more about L.K., contact former State Senator and Lincoln Mayor Don Wesely. He can tell you all sorts of interesting tales about L.K. I only know L.K. from the conversations I was lucky enough to have with him and I discovered a man who was not only passionate about the things he believed in but had a grand sense of humor and was a brilliant storyteller. You always felt better after some conversation with L.K. and looked forward to the next one.

I was a union kid who enjoyed a secure childhood and a good education because of my dad's membership in the UAW, so I identified with L.K. personally and admired his experience and commitment.

On April 1, 1992, State Senators praised their friend and colleague, L. K. Emry. They then and passed resolution LR 421.

SENATOR WESLEY: Thank you. I want to acknowledge first off appreciation of the Speaker for placing this on the agenda. Former Senator Emry's funeral is at two o'clock this afternoon, and so it was felt to be appropriate to have this resolution considered and hopefully adopted this morning so it could be presented to his family this afternoon. Many of you may have known L. K. Emry, and of course, he was a very active participant in very many affairs over his 81 years. He only served in this Legislature for about eight months, back in 1978, when Senator Wally Barnett left the Legislature to go to work as State Fire Marshall. He was appointed by Senator Exon to fill . . . excuse me, Governor Exon. He was appointed to fill Senator Barnett's place and then fortunately, I guess, I was elected and took over the office in January the following year. But Mr. Emry served as my campaign chairman and advisor and close friend over the course of my service in the Legislature. He worked hard and long in his job at the Burlington shops in Havelack and continually had an attitude that he needed to serve others, beyond his own family and meeting their needs, he cared about other families and other needs of other working people. As he worked hard in the labor movement, he worked hard in the Democratic Party, he worked hard in public service in the way he could best serve, that being a citizen who spoke out as strong and as loud as he could on behalf of those who were

disadvantaged. He was a great man and I'm sorry to see him pass away.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes. I rise in support of Senator Wesely's resolution and thank him for bringing it. You know, L. K. Emry was one of those people I think you just thought would go on forever. He was . . . he was just a rock. He was the salt of the earth type of human being. He was lovable, he was a person who really practiced what he believed. I just . . . I really can't express my feelings at this moment about L. K. Emry, except to say that I think that he should be honored here today. He believed in the . . . in the . . . the government of this country. He believed that citizens should work to improve government and to improve our lives. And he did this until the very end of his life. Interestingly enough, he spent this last weekend out at the AFL-CIO convention in Grand Island and was a participant right up to the very end.

The L. K. Emry Memorial Labor Education Scholarship as Presented in the Brochure

The L. K. Emry Memorial Labor Education Scholarship for Labor Families will be awarded to a student who is or has a parent/guardian who is a member of one of the recognized Nebraska labor unions. The scholarship can be applied toward tuition at one of the three University of Nebraska campuses—Lincoln, Omaha or Kearney.

The Lincoln Central Labor Union's L. K. Emry Scholarship Committee will annually grant the scholarship in January for the following school year. The amount of the scholarship will vary from year to year depending on the financial gains of the scholarship's endowment.

A prospective candidate for the scholarship must provide the following to the Committee to be eligible:

1. The enclosed application. More applications can be obtained by calling the Lincoln Central Labor Union at 402-466-5444.
2. An essay on the contributions of organized labor to America.
3. An official high school or University of Nebraska transcript.

The Committee will review the application and evaluate each candidate on grade point average, class rank, community service, and the essay on the contributions of organized labor.

Pictures from the 2014 Lancaster County Convention

Photographs on this page and the following two pages feature scenes from our LCDP County Convention, held June 8, 2014 at the IBEW Hall.









*Lancaster County
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