

ISSUE NO. 3 • AUGUST 2026

RICKETTS REVIEW

SPECIAL ISSUE

CELEBRATING
AMERICA 250

250 YEARS OF FREEDOM



RICKETTS REVIEW







Fellow Nebraskans,

This year, we celebrate 250 years of American freedom.

We were founded 250 years ago, through a revolution, but also through a revolutionary idea. Our Founders believed that God gave people their rights, not the government. This was truly a radical idea at the time.

American democracy was formed to protect the God-given rights of everyone. We have government of the people, by the people, for the people. We continue to hold and celebrate that all men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. In America, all have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Our unwavering commitment to these rights makes this country the greatest in the world. As we celebrate 250 years of freedom, we remember the brave Americans who have preserved and protected our great nation. To the women and men who have sacrificed on behalf of America – both now and in generations past – we thank you. We are the home of the free because of the brave.

In Nebraska, we know that America is always worth celebrating. We understand and respect the values that make America exceptional. We believe in faith, family, and freedom. These values are the same ones that guide my service to Nebraska. We've proven that a smaller, more accountable government works best. Nebraska is what America should be.

As we look to the next 250 years, we must recommit to the radical idea of our founding. As President Reagan said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." In the face of challenges both home and abroad, we must unite around American freedom and Nebraska values.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you. God bless Nebraska and God bless America.

Pete Ricketts
U.S. Senator for Nebraska



RICKETTS

PROVEN NEBRASKA SOLUTIONS, READY FOR AMERICA

PROVEN NEBRASKA SOLUTIONS

No State Income Tax on Social Security

When I was Governor, Nebraska instituted no state income tax on social security benefits.

Workforce Housing

When I was Governor, we implemented a workforce housing program to make homeownership more accessible for Nebraskans.

No State Income Tax on Veterans

When I was Governor, we fully exempted military retirement benefits from state income tax.

Leader in Crypto Regulation

When I was Governor, we were the second state to enact a stablecoin regulatory framework.

READY FOR AMERICA

Working Families Tax Cuts Senior Deduction

With a new \$6,000 deduction, 88% of seniors will not pay federal income taxes on their social security.

21st Century ROAD to Housing

With this landmark housing legislation, we are cutting red tape to make homeownership more affordable.

Tax Cuts for Veterans Act

In the Senate, I'm fighting to make this a nationwide policy, saving the average veteran enlisted over \$500 per month.

GENIUS Act

States like Nebraska will receive expedited approval for stablecoin regulation because of my amendment to the GENIUS Act.



RECORD

REDUCING THE COST OF LIVING

During his four years in office, President Biden added \$8.4 trillion to our national debt, which now stands at \$39 trillion. Our debt would cost every household \$291,000. At more than 122% of GDP, the debt is greater than the total amount of goods and services produced here each year. The national debt is this large because Washington has a spending problem.

The federal budget was \$4.4 trillion in FY2019, \$6.75 trillion in FY2024. President Biden oversaw a 55% increase. Now, we're reversing that trend. As of May 2026, the FY2026 deficit is \$116 billion smaller than it was at the same point in FY2025.

We cut:

- **\$540 billion** from the Inflation Reduction Act
- **\$15 billion** from Build Back Better
- **\$9 billion** in other wasteful spending

These cuts included **\$8 billion** of foreign aid spending that was unnecessary or worked against America's interests.



CUTS TO BIDEN & CONGRESSIONAL DEMOCRATS' WASTEFUL SPENDING

\$6 MILLION ON RADICAL CLIMATE POLICIES IN MEXICAN CITIES

\$20 BILLION TO RADICAL CLIMATE GROUPS

\$77 MILLION ON DEI PROGRAMS IN ONE YEAR ALONE

\$33 MILLION TO TRANSGENDER TAMPONS IN BANGLADESH

\$4 MILLION ON "SEDENTARY MIGRANTS" IN COLOMBIA

\$3 MILLION TO SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN VENEZUELA

STRENGTHENING THE GOOD LIFE

TAX SAVINGS FOR NEBRASKA FAMILIES

Our country was founded on the belief that all Americans have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. These building blocks make the American Dream possible. We live in a nation of opportunity. A nation that believes that hard work leads to success. For the last 250 years, Americans from all backgrounds have achieved their American Dream.

In the Senate, I'm fighting to put more money back in the pockets of Nebraska families and make the American Dream more attainable.



The Working Families Tax Cuts are a generational investment in Nebraska.

- We **eliminated taxes on overtime pay**, up to \$12,500.
- We **eliminated taxes on tips**, up to \$25,000.
- Across the country, the **average refund was 11.5% higher**, with the average refund being **\$3,276**.
- We also avoided a massive tax increase, **keeping \$2,400 a year** in the pockets of the average Nebraska family. That's a house payment.
- American seniors will receive a new tax deduction of **\$6,000 or \$12,000** for couples. That means **88%** of seniors will no longer pay federal income tax on their Social Security.

Already, we know more than **53 million people** have benefited from **no tax on overtime, no tax on tips, or the bonus deduction for seniors**.

Senate Republicans made a cumulative investment of **\$124 billion** in the kids of low- and middle-income families thanks to lower tax rates, Trump Accounts, and child tax credits.

- Families are supported with the increased child tax credit, providing a **\$2,200** tax deduction for each child. That's more than doubled.
- The child and dependent care tax credit was increased from a maximum of 35% to **50%**.
- We enhanced the dependent care assistance program, which now excludes **\$7,500** of expenses from income, that's up from \$5,000.
- The employer-provided childcare credit was expanded from \$150,000 to **\$500,000**. A new **\$600,000** childcare credit was created for small businesses.
- We made Senator Deb Fischer's **Paid Family Medical Leave Tax Credit** permanent, encouraging businesses to offer maternity and paternity leave.
- **Trump Accounts** provide all young Americans with investment accounts that kickstart the American dream. For kids born between 2025 and 2028, the federal government is providing a **\$1,000 contribution**.

The Working Families Tax Cuts also raised and made permanent the **Death Tax exemption**.

- In Nebraska, over **80% of farms are family owned**, and they should stay that way.
- Even decades from now, farmers and ranchers' hard work can be passed on to the next generation.
- Over **\$200 billion in hard-earned assets** from farmers, ranchers, small business owners, and others will be passed on to family instead of the government, thanks to this provision.

HEALTHY NEBRASKA FAMILIES

I'm working to help make sure Nebraskans get the care they deserve. A great way to do that is through telehealth services, especially in our rural areas. In the Working Families Tax Cuts, we extended telehealth waivers. I was proud to cosponsor the permanent telehealth waiver bill, the **CONNECT for Health Act**.

The Working Families Tax Cuts also included the **Rural Health Transformation Fund**. I led a letter in support of Nebraska's application and asked for full funding. The state government was awarded \$218 million this year, which was 10% more than they applied for.

COMBATTING LONELINESS

No Nebraskan should feel alone. But these days, families are more spread out. Digital connections can't replace face-to-face relationships. I'm working to provide tools to better understand loneliness and strengthen communities. Every Nebraskan should feel supported.

That's why I introduced the bipartisan **Improving Measurements for Loneliness and Isolation Act**. Representative Mike Flood introduced the companion bill in the U.S. House of Representatives. This bill would establish a working group that standardizes the measurements of loneliness and isolation. This would allow experts to target the root causes of loneliness.

I'm also fighting to improve mental health care for our servicemembers and veterans. I introduced the **MIND Our Veterans Act** to ensure that servicemembers receive effective, evidence-based mental health screenings prior to separation from active duty.

I am a co-lead of the **Campus Lifeline Act**. This bill would strengthen student mental health and suicide prevention efforts. It would expand student-led outreach on college campuses and increase awareness of the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

We must recognize and address the rise in mental health issues in America. Across Nebraska, mental health care providers work hard to treat the growing problem of loneliness. I'm supporting these providers, raising awareness, and fighting for improved care for our veterans.





PUBLIC SAFETY

CLOSING THE BORDER WAS ALWAYS A CHOICE

A nation is only as secure as its borders. President Biden's open border policies created a national security, humanitarian, and drug catastrophe. President Trump and Senate Republicans promised to secure the border. That's exactly what we've done.

Under President Biden, there were 10.5 million illegal border encounters. Every state was a border state. Over 250 people on the FBI's terrorist watch list crossed into America.

President Trump and Senate Republicans are keeping Americans safe. For 15 consecutive months, not a single illegal alien has been released at the border.

Last January, President Trump signed the **Laken Riley Act** into law, ensuring criminal illegal aliens will be detained and deported.

Sarah's Law was included in the Laken Riley Act. This law is named after Sarah Root, who was killed by a criminal illegal alien just hours after graduating from Bellevue University. Sarah's Law closes a loophole that allowed Sarah's murderer to be free for nine years. A decade later, President Trump and Senate Republicans brought Sarah's killer to justice.

FIGHTING TO FUND LAW ENFORCEMENT

This past year, Democrats refused to fund our nation's law enforcement.

They shut down the government for the longest period ever: **43 days**. They refused to fully fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and our Border Patrol agents or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers.

Senate Republicans passed the **Secure America Act** into law to fully fund DHS. It pays our Border Patrol and ICE agents. Democrats refused to join us. I was proud to vote for its passage. I will continue to support those who put their lives on the line to protect our homeland.



FIGHTING AGAINST ILLEGAL DRUGS

In the U.S. Senate, I am building on work I did when I was Governor to keep deadly drugs like fentanyl off our streets.

In my last year as Governor, the Nebraska State Patrol confiscated **two** times as much methamphetamine, **three** times as much fentanyl, and **ten** times as much cocaine as they did in just the prior two years. They had to do this work as a result of the Biden Administration's terrible open border policies. Our troopers proved daily that, given the right resources, they can and will keep our state safe from illicit drugs.

As Senator, I've voted for these same types of resources to be included in federal border security laws. This includes the **Secure America Act** and the **HALT Fentanyl Act**.

Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18–45. Under the Biden Administration, **76,000** pounds of fentanyl flowed across the open border. That's **over 10 billion lethal doses**. That's enough to kill every American **30 times** over.

Congress passed, and President Trump signed, the **HALT Fentanyl Act** into law. The law permanently classifies fentanyl and its analogues as Schedule I substances. This leads to harsher sentences for fentanyl traffickers. Less fentanyl means fewer overdose deaths.

I also introduced legislation to fight against next-generation drugs like Nitazene. Nitazenes are synthetic opioids that are often deadlier than fentanyl. My **Nitazene Sanctions Act** would help prevent Nitazenes from becoming the next drug crisis. I am also a co-lead on the **Nitazene Control Act** and **DETECT Nitazenes Act**.

Additionally, I am working to raise awareness of substance misuse and gateway drugs. I lead the bipartisan **Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month Resolution**. This marked October as a month to fight against the scourge of substance abuse. I also led a bipartisan letter urging the Food and Drug Administration to crack down on **kratom**. This dangerous substance is commonly sold in gas stations, misleading young Nebraskans about its safety.

REIGNING IN

FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE

When I was Governor, I worked hard to make sure we used tax dollars wisely. We ran the state like Nebraskans run their households: on a budget and within our means. I'm working to make sure we do the same thing in the Senate.

The Government Accountability Office looked at fraud between 2018 and 2022. They estimated \$233 billion to \$521 billion in taxpayer dollars were fraudulently misused each year. We are working to stop this bleeding of taxpayer dollars. That's why I cofounded the new Senate Anti-Fraud Task Force. We are identifying vulnerabilities in existing programs. We're strengthening government accountability. And we're ensuring proper stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

I also cosponsored the **Protecting American Taxpayers Act** to cut down on government fraud, waste, and abuse. Included bills, like my **Improper Payments Transparency Act**, would make sure government spending is transparent, and the data is accessible. Transparency improves accountability. Senate Republicans have been working since day one to protect hardworking taxpayers. This package continues our work.

The Protecting American Taxpayers Act would make sure that:

- Reimbursements are paid only after a service has been provided.
- Criminals convicted of defrauding the Small Business Administration are prevented from receiving future assistance.
- More than **\$65 billion** in unused COVID funds are returned.
- The President's annual budget request provides data on improper payments.

STOP INSIDER TRADING ACT

No lawmaker should profit off of insider information.

The American people elect lawmakers to represent them and make their communities safer and stronger. Americans should never fear that their representatives are abusing political office or furthering personal interests. That's why I introduced the bipartisan **Stop Insider Trading Act**.

My bill would eliminate even the appearance of impropriety. It would prohibit Members of Congress, their spouses, and dependent children from buying new stocks. It would also require advance notice to sell any stock, so the public knows of any news that could impact a stock's price.

My bill also carries significant penalties. Any violation would incur a **\$2,000 fine or a fine that is 10%** of a transaction — whichever is greater. Additionally, **any profit realized by a sale would be forfeited**. Under my bill, if a lawmaker sold \$1 million in stock without filing advanced public notice, they would be fined \$100,000 — plus forfeit any profits. It's time Congress made this the standard.

The **Stop Insider Trading Act** would ensure no lawmaker can profit off of insider information. By making it law, we can rebuild Americans' trust in their elected representatives.



BIG GOVERNMENT

MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK FOR NEBRASKANS

I sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee, where I'm focused on ending overregulation.

This year, I invited **Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Adam Telle** to Nebraska. He oversees the Army Corps of Engineers. Together, we toured the Missouri River and met with local stakeholders. I was able to share the river's importance to Nebraska with Secretary Telle.



One of the most important roles of the Army Corps of Engineers is to prevent future flooding in our communities. The 2019 flood in Nebraska had devastating impacts. During this flood, four people lost their lives. It cost Nebraska more than \$3 billion in damage. Farmers and ranchers lost \$1 billion. We're working together to make sure this doesn't happen again.

I recently toured the Peru Levee to see progress on flood mitigation efforts. We're working to improve the infrastructure that helps prevent future flooding. The Army Corps of Engineers is spending \$300 million on a project along the lower Missouri River. This project will repair flood damage and mitigate future risk.

As we look to improve the Army Corps of Engineers and its programs, preventing loss of life and property should be the top priority. It is concerning that it has not always been treated as such.

I've also worked extensively on the **Waters of the United States (WOTUS)**. The Obama and Biden Administrations both tried to illegally increase the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) authority through WOTUS.

When I was Governor, I fought back against this overreach. They redefined what navigable waters are. They claimed that navigable waters include roadside ditches, puddles on construction sites, and farm ponds. Those aren't navigable waters. Nebraska led a lawsuit that blocked the EPA's expansion of power.

Now, my colleagues and I are making sure the EPA is following the law. We're working with the Trump Administration and fighting for common sense water infrastructure regulation. Last year, the EPA proposed a rule to modify the definition of WOTUS to deliver clarity and predictability for Nebraska farmers, ranchers, and small business owners.

SUPPORTING THE HEROES WHO KEEP US FREE

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, we reflect on what has led to 250 years of success. We are the home of the free because of the brave. I'm committed to taking care of the nearly 120,000 veterans in Nebraska. We must fight for those who have fought for us. **We owe them more than we can ever repay.**

When I was Governor, I signed a bill fully exempting military retirement benefits from state income tax. We launched a state program to **ease the transition from military service** to civilian employment. We increased pay for Nebraska Veterans' Affairs (VA) care technicians by **20%**. We also merged the Nebraska VA Department and the Division of Veterans' Homes to create a **one-stop shop for veterans' services**.

Veterans have sacrificed for our state and nation. We need to provide relief for veterans at the federal level, just like we did in Nebraska. That's why I introduced the bipartisan **Tax Cuts for Veterans Act** to eliminate the federal tax on military retirement benefits. This could save the average enlisted veteran over **\$500 per month** and **\$6,000 per year**.

I am also working to ensure Nebraska veterans have access to quality healthcare. Repeat violent offenders should not be allowed to go unchecked in our communities.

CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

My bipartisan **CARING for Our Veterans Health Act** passed the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. The bill would make sure that veterans' medical history is shared and available for VA medical centers following care in the community. Nearly **75%** of veterans return to VA medical centers after receiving services from community providers. This bill would direct VA medical facilities to obtain medical documentation from community care providers. It would establish the guidelines and procedures to do so.

I also introduced the **MIND Our Veterans Act**. Our servicemembers should be set up for success when they transition back to civilian life. Thousands of servicemembers transition from active duty into veteran status every year. This transition can bring significant challenges, especially when it comes to mental health. Currently, the Separation Health Assessment (SHA) lacks a standardized, validated mental health and drug-use screening. This jeopardizes early identification and intervention for servicemembers in crisis. This causes the VA to address problems after they have escalated. My bill would ensure that servicemembers receive effective, evidence-based mental health screenings prior to separation from active duty.

I also cosponsored the **Major Richard Star Act**. This provides full benefits for combat-injured veterans with less than 20 years of military service.

Our servicemembers and veterans sacrifice for the country. That's why I'm fighting in the Senate to support these brave women and men.

BACKING THE BLUE

As Governor, I signed into law one of the most comprehensive law enforcement and public safety packages in Nebraska's history. We provided retention bonuses and education benefits. We also improved retirement benefits for our police. Law enforcement officers and their kids received tuition waivers for Nebraska universities. Retired officers were allowed to deduct their health insurance premiums from state taxes. This was another way we expressed our gratitude for the work of our police forces.

My work to support law enforcement continues in the U.S. Senate. I am a member of the **Senate Law Enforcement Caucus**. I'm co-leading the **Back the Blue Act** and the **Thin Blue Line Act**. The bills would provide officers with more tools to protect themselves and increase penalties for targeting law enforcement. I also joined the **BLUE Act**. This bill would safeguard the personal information of police officers and their family members. Activists and protesters use this information to target officers and their families. This is unacceptable. The **BLUE Act** would make it illegal.

I also introduced the **Karly Rain Wood Act**, which would establish a national online registry of repeat violent offenders. Repeat violent offenders should not be allowed to go unchecked in our communities.

This year, we recognized **National Police Week** with a bipartisan Senate resolution that honors law enforcement officers who made the ultimate sacrifice. It includes Nebraska's **State Patrol Trooper Kyle McAcy**. While responding to a collision during a snowstorm last year, Trooper McAcy was hit by a vehicle. He died on the scene. We continue to honor his sacrifice and pray for his loved ones.

SUPPORTING NEBRASKA LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement agencies in Nebraska have earned a stellar reputation through their dedicated work to protect the public. Here in Nebraska, we're going the extra mile to attract the best and brightest to serve in law enforcement. We're committed to providing our officers with training and resources that are second-to-none.

- When I was Governor, we invested nearly **\$50 million** into the **Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center**.
- We upgraded our **State Patrol Crime Laboratory** by over **\$16 million**.
- We adopted the **Law Enforcement Attraction and Retention Act**, providing retention bonuses, education benefits, health insurance tax breaks, and improvements to retirement plans for our police.

These investments equipped officers with world-class training and tools to keep people safe.



LOWERING THE

STRENGTHENING HARD-WORKING NEBRASKA FAMILIES

The Working Families Tax Cuts is a generational investment in Nebraska. We eliminated taxes on overtime pay and on tips. Across the country, the average refund is over **11.5% higher** — an average of **\$3,276 larger**.

The Working Families Tax Cuts avoided a massive tax increase. Without it, the average Nebraska family would pay an extra **\$2,400** a year in taxes. That's money that Nebraskans can continue to spend on groceries and utilities or save toward a family vacation.

An Omaha waitress had her wages incorrectly reported. Her W-2 reported some overtime pay as regular pay. When this was corrected, she received an **extra \$1,500** in her tax return. She got this money because of the no tax on overtime provision. That's a monthly house payment. That's meaningful.

When I was Governor, we eliminated state income taxes on Social Security benefits. I continued this work as Senator by supporting the Working Families Tax Cuts. The law gives seniors a new tax deduction of **\$6,000 per person or \$12,000 for couples**. This provision begins phasing out at \$75,000 in individual annual income and \$150,000 in joint income. At \$175,000 for individual income and \$250,000 in joint income, it is completely eliminated. That means **88%** of seniors will no longer pay federal income tax on their Social Security. That's about **265,000 Nebraska seniors** who won't pay *any* income tax on their Social Security benefits.

Already, we know more than **53 million people** have benefited from **no tax on overtime**, **no tax on tips**, or the **bonus deduction for seniors**.

TRUMP ACCOUNTS RENEW OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG NEBRASKANS

All American kids under the age of 18 are eligible for a Trump Account. Those born between January 1, 2025, and December 31, 2028, will be able to enroll in accounts that will automatically have **\$1,000** deposited. This investment will be provided by the U.S. Treasury. Parents and guardians will be the custodians of the accounts, but kids will own them. At 18, the Trump Account is theirs.

These accounts will work like a traditional Individual Retirement Account. Up to **\$5,000** a year can be deposited into a Trump Account. Parents, family members, churches, community groups, non-profits, and even employers can contribute. Many have already committed to contributing.

Our state government is opening accounts for all foster kids in Nebraska. These Fostering the Future Accounts will work just the same, making sure that young Nebraskans in foster care have a little extra financial help.

This is money that young Nebraskans can put toward college, buying their first home, or starting a business. For the children whose accounts will start with \$1,000, additional contributions are not required. The accounts will still grow.

COST OF LIVING

SUPPORTING RURAL NEBRASKA JOBS

The Working Families Tax Cuts also helps young, rural Nebraskans get a head start:

- We excluded agricultural assets from student financial aid calculations — a huge win for our rural families trying to send their kids to school.
- We extended the **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Benefit** from five to **ten years**, giving new producers access to critical risk management tools.
- We expanded Pell Grant eligibility to short-term job training.

The expanded Pell Grant eligibility includes hands-on fields like welding, diesel tech, and irrigation systems. Now, a young Nebraskan in Scottsbluff can learn a trade and start working at places like Aulick Industries without piling up debt. Metropolitan Community College in Omaha is one of the first colleges in the country to offer this Workforce Pell program.

MAKING HOUSING AFFORDABLE FOR ALL NEBRASKANS

In the Senate, I continue to work on lowering housing costs for all Nebraskans. This is a real issue for Nebraskans and is often driven by overreach and excessive regulation. For example, **25%** of the cost of a single-family home comes from regulations. For multi-family homes or apartments, regulation is about **40%** of the cost. One Nebraska apartment builder told me he used to be able to build apartments for about \$15,000 per unit. Now, it costs him over \$200,000 per unit. The average age of a first-time home buyer is now about **40** years old across the country. Just a decade ago, the average first-time homebuyer was **31**.

This is not a new issue. When I was Governor, I took steps to address this. We passed the **Rural Workforce Housing Bill**. We created a **\$7 million** rural workforce housing fund and later added **\$10 million** more to it. Nebraska communities applied for grants, typically to make low-interest loans. These funds helped homebuilders build houses and apartment buildings in rural communities. They helped cover construction costs, down payment assistance, and technical assistance. This program was simple and successful.

As Senator, I'm advocating for this proven Nebraska solution for the rest of the country. With the bipartisan **21st Century ROAD to Housing Act**, we're on a path to make homeownership more affordable. Now law, the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act includes many of my bipartisan bills:

- The **Streamlining Rural Housing Act** enhances rural permitting efficiency and lowers costs.
- The **Rural Housing Regulatory Relief Act** streamlines NEPA reviews.
- The **Improving Housing Access Act and Housing for America's Middle-Class Act** expand current housing programs to more Nebraskans.
- The **VA Home Loan Awareness Act** and the **Veterans Affairs Loan Informed Disclosure (VALID) Act** better inform veterans of the VA Home Loan Program and make veterans' housing more accessible.

With the **21st Century ROAD to Housing**, we're cutting down on unnecessary regulations. That makes it easier to build single-family homes, apartments, and fabricated homes. We're making commonsense changes. This includes removing the requirement to have a chassis on fabricated homes. That reduces the cost of fabricated homes by about \$10,000. More affordable homes on the market will help improve the cost of living for all Nebraskans.



SUPPORTING NEBRASKA AGRICULTURE

FIGHTING FOR NEBRASKA FARMERS AND RANCHERS

America has always been rooted in agriculture. It's the heart and soul of what we do in Nebraska. Nebraska farmers and ranchers feed our country and fuel the world. In the Senate, I'm working to make sure our farmers and ranchers can continue this important work for generations to come.

With the **Working Families Tax Cuts**, Senate Republicans invested in Nebraska farmers and ranchers:

- We **permanently expanded the Death Tax Exemption**. This will allow over **\$200 billion** in hard-earned assets to be passed on to the next generation of farmers and ranchers.
- We unlocked **\$233 million per year** for the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) to spend on animal biosecurity programs, such as countering New World Screwworm. This is **seven times larger** than previous funding for animal disease prevention and response.
- We provided long-term funding for animal health programs and research centers like the **U.S. Meat Animal Research Center** in Clay Center.
- We enhanced the farm safety net. Reference prices were updated for the first time in 11 years. They now reflect today's markets.
- Drought aid under the **Livestock Forage Program** has been improved. Producers facing feed losses from grazing shortfalls will see faster relief.

I've also introduced several bills in support of Nebraska farmers and ranchers:

- The **FAIR Labels Act** would make sure only real beef, not plant-based or cell-cultivated protein, is labeled as "beef" or "meat."
- The **Organic Imports Verification Act** would increase oversight of fake organic products imported by foreign nations.
- The **FENCE Act** would expand flexibility for farmers and ranchers recovering from disaster.
- The **Sound Science Act** would strengthen the science used for risk reviews and improve interagency coordination. This would allow regulated chemicals, such as formaldehyde, to move through review more efficiently. They would also remain available for use in the feed supply chain.
- The **USDA-DOI LINK Act** would strengthen technology collaboration between the USDA and Department of the Interior. This would better support land management, disaster preparedness, and recovery.

EXPANDING THE USE OF RENEWABLE FUELS

Nebraska is a biofuels state. We're second in the nation for ethanol production.

With biofuels, consumers save money at the pump. They strengthen domestic markets. They're a win for consumers, the environment, and producers. Biofuels can save households around **\$400** per year. The last time I filled up at Hy-Vee, I saved 55 cents a gallon with E10. Last year, Nebraskans saved **\$325 million** using ethanol blends. With E15, we can save even more.

In the Senate, I'm fighting to expand the use of renewable fuels:

- I'm working with Senator Deb Fischer and Senate leadership to pass **year-round, nation-wide E15**.
- I introduced the bipartisan **Renewable Fuels for Ocean-Going Vessels Act**. It would expand the use of biofuels on ships, reducing emissions from shipping and lowering fuel costs for global trade.
- I supported the **Farm to Fly Act** for developing Sustainable Aviation Fuel.
- I voted to extend the **45Z Clean Fuel Credit** for domestic feedstocks in the Working Families Tax Cuts. These credits are now only available for North American feedstocks. This makes sure American farmers and ranchers benefit.
- I voted to confirm **EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin**. Under his leadership, the EPA released **historic Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs)** for Nebraska producers.



OPENING MARKETS FOR NEBRASKA FARMERS & RANCHERS

A highlight of my time as Governor was leading trade missions with Nebraska farmers, ranchers, and businesses. They are our best ambassadors. They are prepared to export and capable of feeding the world. They just need a level playing field and opportunities to sell. In the Senate, I'm fighting to secure new markets and strengthen American agriculture.

The Working Families Tax Cuts strengthened trade promotion programs. We provided **\$285 million annually** for expanding commercial export markets. That's doubled funding for the **Market Access Program (MAP)** and the **Foreign Market Development (FMD)** program. More investment means more demand for Nebraska beef, corn, and soybeans abroad.

Nebraska is the nation's **fifth largest agricultural exporter**, with **over \$8 billion in agricultural exports** last year. We are top in the nation for beef and veal exports. We also lead across corn, feed grains, and soybeans.

The vast majority of our exports are to the Indo-Pacific. This gives Communist China outsized leverage in disrupting Nebraska trade. That's why I introduced the **MARKET Act**. It would help farmers and ranchers diversify their exports. It pushes back against giving Communist China outsized trade leverage over American agriculture. The legislation would require the USDA and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to look for opportunities to diversify our exports. It would also require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide recommendations to mitigate trade threats and barriers from Communist China.

HELPING RECOVER AND REBUILD

Nebraska's ranchers are the best in the world. They've shown it this year in response to the devastating fires across the state. The wildfires across Western Nebraska are the worst since we became a state. Despite the challenge posed by the wildfires, Nebraska ranchers banded together.

I talk regularly with ranchers trying to rebuild. They tell me of the challenges and policies that get in the way. I hosted **Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Richard Fordyce** in Nebraska earlier this year so that USDA could hear directly from farmers. We explored where flexibility was needed. We were able to get Farm Service Agency (FSA) assistance and shift USDA policy. One example of USDA flexibility was changing the standards for recovery funds used in fence posts. This also inspired my **FENCE Act** to allow recovery funds to be used for virtual fencing.

RENEWING OPPORTUNITY

FIGHTING FOR NEBRASKA BUSINESSES

The Working Families Tax Cuts delivered for Nebraska small businesses and manufacturers. The cost of doing business is now more affordable. We are encouraging businesses that want to invest in research or expand manufacturing. Local businesses can now tackle projects they've been putting off because they were too expensive. Best of all, these businesses know that their workers keep more of their income.

- The Working Families Tax Cuts made the **immediate deduction of research and development costs** permanent. This encourages innovation.
- We allowed business owners to **fully expense plant and equipment**. This encourages more investment in factories. This also includes property like tractors and other heavy machinery. A corn grower will be able to fully write off a new, more efficient combine.
- Another provision in the bill **boosts expensing for tools and smaller business assets**. This helps everyone from welders to seed dealers invest in the tools they need to improve productivity.
- As businesses see lowered tax burdens, they'll be able to **grow and hire more workers**.
- These provisions will make Nebraska businesses **more competitive**, allowing them to attract a **larger workforce**.

The Working Families Tax Cuts made the expanded **Qualified Business Income** deduction permanent. This specifically benefits small businesses.

- Often referred to as **Section 199A**, this tax provision now has a lower minimum, higher thresholds, and is tied to inflation.
- More Nebraska small business owners will benefit – a minimum of **\$400** if your qualifying business income is at least **\$1,000**.
- Had this provision expired at the end of **2025**, agricultural communities would have faced a **\$2 billion** tax increase.





I've heard from Nebraskans about how the Working Families Tax Cuts are working for them:

A restaurant owner described how he was able to afford deferred maintenance because of the Working Families Tax Cuts. These are necessary expenses that he no longer had to put off. He just couldn't afford it before. Thanks to full, immediate expensing on capital equipment, years of deferred maintenance is now affordable for mom-and-pop businesses.

A business with distribution centers and multiple stores across the state shared the bonus depreciation portion of the law is a "gamechanger" for them. They are able to not only reinvest in their teams and facilities in Nebraska, but also open new facilities across the country.

A factory owner invested more in part because of the immediate expensing for their investments.

On the Senate Banking Committee, I'm fighting to make sure rural communities have access to financial services. That includes helping Nebraska's small, regional banks remain strong.

Rural communities rely on their local institutions to provide them with flexible credit. New bank formation has been low since 2009. The total number of banks has declined by **more than 70%** since the 1980s. That's why I introduced the **Rural Depositories Revitalization Study Act**. It would identify solutions to ensure rural banks can be created and continue to thrive. It would also direct federal banking agencies to identify concrete solutions to strengthen rural financial institutions. That way, we can protect small-town depositors and keep local credit flowing. Regulations written for big banks should not apply to small ones. My bill would allow Nebraskans' money to stay in their community. That helps whether you're applying for a mortgage or trying to finance a combine.

I'm also cutting through red tape and leveling the playing field for Nebraskans. That's why I introduced:

- The **China Subsidy Response and Export Competitiveness Act**, which would allow the Export-Import Bank to invest in secure supply chains. This would enable American companies to compete on a level playing field and bring more jobs back to America.
- The **HALOS Act**, which would remove unnecessary barriers that complicate participation in tech Demo Days. This would encourage early engagement between entrepreneurs and investors. The bill would help startups succeed.
- The **Business Owners Protection Act**, which would repeal unnecessary and unused Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) discretionary authorities. Current, unused rules force businesses to unnecessarily plan for compliance. My bill would stop this.
- The **ELEVATE Act**, which would reduce regulatory and compliance burdens on small businesses newly entering public markets. This would let them devote more of their resources to growing their company.

I'm also working to continue strengthening innovation and protecting consumers. When I was Governor, I signed legislation into law that put Nebraska at the forefront of financial innovation. The **Nebraska Financial Innovation Act** made Nebraska the second state in the country to establish a state-level stablecoin regulatory framework.

We passed the **GENIUS Act**. This law creates protections for consumers using dollar-based cryptocurrency. It protects consumers while promoting innovation. The law included my amendment to give priority to states like ours when becoming certified. This is because of the **Nebraska Financial Innovation Act** I signed as Governor. Nebraska can continue to be a major innovator and national leader in this space.

I voted for the **CLARITY Act** in the Senate Banking Committee. It provides clear, enforceable guardrails for digital assets. It will strengthen our ability to counter illicit financial activity and national security threats. I also fought for provisions that will preserve anti-fraud laws targeting crypto ATMs. These state-level laws, like the one Nebraska recently passed, help curb crypto ATM scams and fraud.

STRENGTHENING

HONORING OUR MILITARY TRADITION

For 250 years, our military has protected America. Senate Republicans and the Trump Administration are honoring this tradition. Military recruitment numbers are at historic levels. We voted to raise servicemember pay, and we're making sure our military has what it needs to confront our biggest threats.

The Working Families Tax Cuts **invested over \$150 billion** to deter foreign adversaries. This demonstrates peace through strength.

The law:

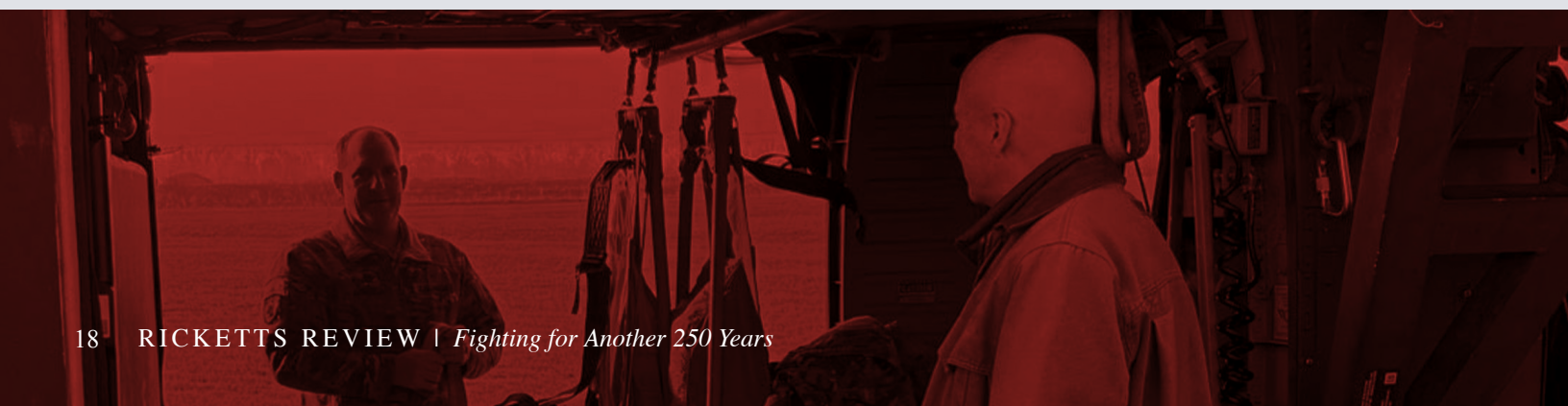
- Makes it clear that we will meet any threats with force and resolve. We are deterring foreign adversaries like Communist China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea.
- Includes **\$25 billion** for the Golden Dome. This is a layered missile defense shield that will protect Americans from evolving threats.
- Strengthens the **Defense Production Act**. This makes our military supply chains resilient and ready for any challenge.
- Provides **\$29 billion** for shipbuilding and expanding the maritime industrial base. That includes funds for a Virginia-class submarine, two destroyers, new oilers, and unmanned surface vehicles.
- Supports our Coast Guard in their work to counter drug and human trafficking. It will also increase our Arctic deterrence. We funded 17 new icebreakers, 21 new cutters, more than 40 helicopters, and 6 new planes.
- Supports the development of the B-21 bomber fleet. This includes expanded munitions production and battlefield applications of artificial intelligence.

HONORING

When our state or nation needs them, the Nebraska National Guard stands ready.

Our National Guard has deployed to combat wildfires and provide disaster relief. They deployed to the Southern Border. They deployed to our nation's capital. They protected residents, visitors, and institutions during our nation's 250th anniversary. In April, Nebraska Guardsmen were on site during the assassination attempt against President Trump at the White House Correspondents Dinner. Brave Nebraska women and men helped secure the scene, evacuate attendees, and protect President Trump.

The Nebraska National Guard keeps us secure and represents our state with honor around the globe. Thank you for your service this year and every year.



OUR DEFENSE

INVESTING IN NEBRASKA'S DEFENSE

We're restoring peace through strength to deter our adversaries and keep Americans safe. Our defense investments also deliver for Nebraska. Nebraska's airmen, missile programs, and military bases help defend our country every day. These investments will mean more jobs, more innovation, and a stronger defense posture right here in Nebraska.

The **Working Families Tax Cuts** included:

- **\$2.5 billion** for risk reduction activities tied to the Sentinel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program. This system will be partly based in Western Nebraska.
- **\$168 million** to accelerate production of the Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC) at Offutt Air Force Base.

The **2026 National Defense Authorization Act** included:

- Requirements to field the Sentinel ICBM program in Nebraska by Sept. 30, 2033.
- **\$11 million** to support the Nuclear Command, Control, Communications (NC3) Network Sensor Demonstration at Offutt Air Force Base.
- **\$15 million** to support the innovative NC3 Rapid Engineering Architecture Collaboration Hub program (REACH) at Offutt Air Force Base.
- **\$40 million** for the design of hangars and other facilities for the SAOC. The new planes will replace the aging E-4B Nightwatch planes at Offutt Air Force Base.
- A designation for STRATCOM's Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (JEMSO) office at Offutt Air Force Base. This allows Offutt to lead the testing and evaluation of Dynamic Spectrum Sharing (DSS) technologies.
- Modernizations for the 557th Weather Wing's AI and cloud infrastructure. It also formally establishes Offutt's role of providing weather and environmental data to the Intelligence Community.

SERVICE

We must also honor and remember a great Nebraskan.

Master Sergeant Noah Tietjens died in March. He was killed in Kuwait by the Islamic Republic of Iran during Operation Epic Fury.

As a young man, he joined the military to protect and serve our nation. He gave his last full measure of devotion after serving nearly two decades protecting our country.

I mourn with my fellow Nebraskans, and I ask all to pray for his wife, Shelley, and his son, Dylan. We also pray for the loved ones of the other American servicemembers who have been killed in Operation Epic Fury.

They are truly great Americans who died protecting our nation.



COMBATTING

COMMUNIST CHINA IS THE GREATEST EXTERNAL THREAT

Communist China is the greatest external threat to the American way of life. We need to deter Communist China from starting a war. War between the U.S. and China would be devastating for America and the world.

The Chinese Communist Party wants to replace the United States as the sole global power. Dictator Xi Jinping has no problem hurting Americans or Nebraskans in this pursuit. I'm fighting to combat Communist China's malign influence in my role as **Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy**. In the Senate, I'm fighting to combat Communist China's malign influence. We will counter their spying. We will not accept their aggression.

LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNIST CHINA

Communist China is using our financial system to fund their malicious activities. They are using our stock market to raise money for their military industrial base and to oppress their own people. I introduced four bills to stop this.

- The **No Capital Gains for American Adversaries Act** would prevent foreign adversaries' companies from benefiting from lower capital gains tax rates with their stocks.
- The **PRC Military and Human Rights Capital Markets Sanctions Act** would prevent Americans from investing in foreign companies that abuse human rights.
- The **No China in Index Funds Act** would prevent index funds from investing Americans' money in Communist China's companies.
- The **Protecting Endowments from Our Adversaries Act** would prevent university endowments from investing in foreign adversaries that threaten national security.

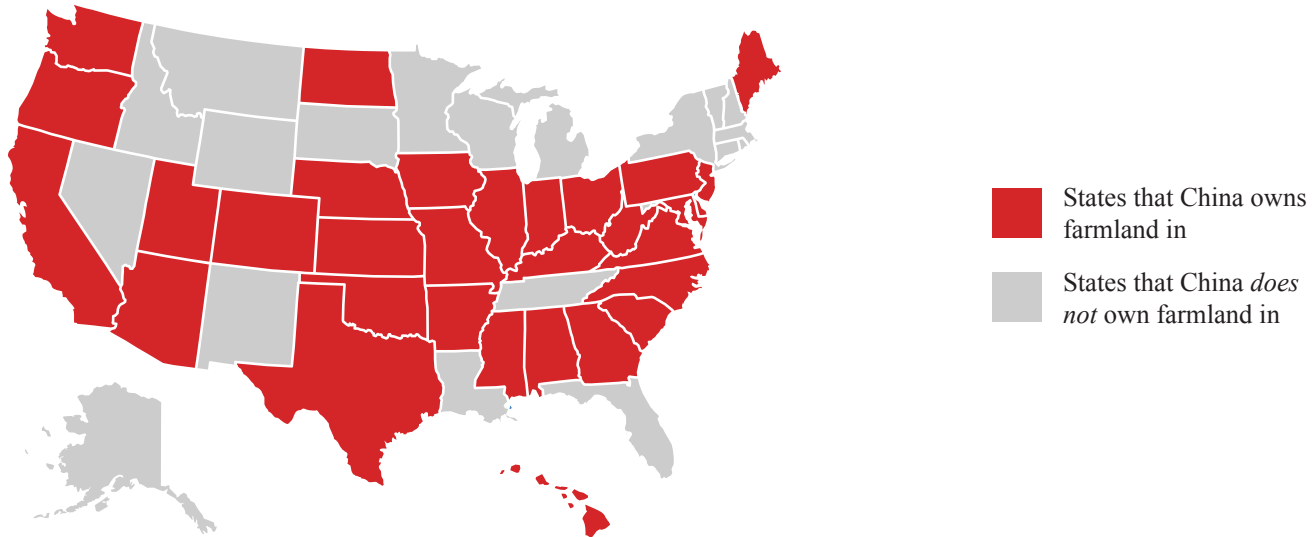
On the Foreign Relations Committee, I'm working to strengthen America's allies and partners to deter Communist China:

- My **PORCUPINE Act** passed the Senate and would deter Communist China by making it easier for us to send arms to Taiwan quicker.
- My **Taiwan Energy Security and Anti-Embargo Act** passed Committee and would increase American energy exports to Taiwan.
- My **UNLOCK AUKUS Act** passed Committee and would enhance collaboration between Australia, the U.K., and the U.S. (AUKUS) on missiles and advanced weapons systems.

BEATING CHINA IN THE AI RACE

Finally, we need to ensure America wins the AI race against China. A world where Communist China leads is bad for the U.S. and the rest of the world. I have two bills to prevent this from happening, the **SAFE Chips Act** and the **MATCH Act**. The MATCH Act is included in the 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). These would ensure China cannot purchase key semiconductor technology from the U.S. or our allies. Our technologies should not be used to arm our adversary.

COMMUNIST CHINA



PROTECTING SENSITIVE NEBRASKA AG LAND

Earlier this year, we learned of an incident at Offutt Air Force Base where a Chinese national was arrested and charged with illegally photographing the sensitive aircraft. This action puts Nebraska airmen and national security at risk. It threatens Offutt's critical mission.

The Chinese Communist Party also has a policy of strategically buying ag land. As of 2023, Communist China owned more than **277,000** acres of farmland. But it's not just about the number of acres that they own. They have targeted sensitive sites surrounding military bases and airfields. That includes Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. These aren't minor intrusions. This is a serious national security threat. That's why I'm leading efforts to restrict ag land ownership by foreign adversaries.

The USDA is responsible for overseeing the foreign purchase of ag land. This authority comes from the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA).

I introduced the bipartisan **AFIDA Improvements Act** to combat foreign adversaries' ownership of American agricultural land. The **AFIDA Improvements Act** would:

- Strengthen the foreign ag land reporting process to make blocking transactions easier.
- Increase information sharing between the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States and USDA. This data sharing can block foreign ag land transactions that previously may have gone undetected.
- Require an online reporting portal for USDA to increase public transparency.

Components of the text are included in the draft Senate farm bill. The bill is also included in the House-passed farm bill.

I also introduced the **Property Location Oversight and Transparency (PLOT) Act** to increase USDA's oversight of foreign purchases of American farmland. The **PLOT Act** would:

- Lower reporting thresholds to capture smaller foreign ownership stakes that currently go unreported.
- Require foreign purchasers to provide detailed digital maps of ag land purchases.
- Make these maps available to USDA, local governments, and the public.

Nebraska ag land should remain in the hands of Nebraskans, not foreign adversaries like Communist China.

SERVING NEBRASKANS

CONSTITUENT CASEWORK WINS

My office and I work hard to provide excellent constituent services. We help Nebraskans navigate the federal bureaucracy. Just last year, we helped **883** Nebraskans navigate federal agencies and save or recover **\$16.4 million**. We helped restore veterans' benefits, expedite Social Security backpay, and correct IRS mistakes. We've even helped Nebraskans abroad return home during conflict.

This past year:

- One Lincoln veteran was mistakenly assigned debt by the VA. He reached out to my office. Our casework team was able to completely zero out the debt. **We saved this Nebraska veteran over \$18,000.**
- A Nebraskan from Omaha was experiencing delays in receiving backpay for Social Security Disability. He contacted our office. This constituent had **missed five months of payments totaling over \$26,000 from Social Security**. Our team was able to expedite the processing of this constituent's claims. We also got a guarantee of a regular payment schedule going forward.
- A couple from McCook had paid their 2020 taxes, but the IRS never credited their account for the payment. After struggling to get a response and with mounting penalties and interest, they contacted our office. We were able to show the IRS proof that the couple made their payments years ago. **The IRS refunded the couple over \$5,000.**

We also welcome every Nebraskan visiting Washington to the Nebraska Breakfast. This is a weekly gathering of our federal delegation and constituents since 1943. We host Mobile Office Hours in each of Nebraska's 93 counties.

One of my great privileges as a U.S. Senator is to have flags flown over the U.S. Capitol for Nebraskans. Presenting these flags is a simple yet meaningful recognition of achievements and milestones. This is especially true during America's 250th anniversary year. Flags can be flown over the U.S. Capitol any day of the year for special occasions or events. I encourage Nebraskans to consider requesting a flag by contacting my office.

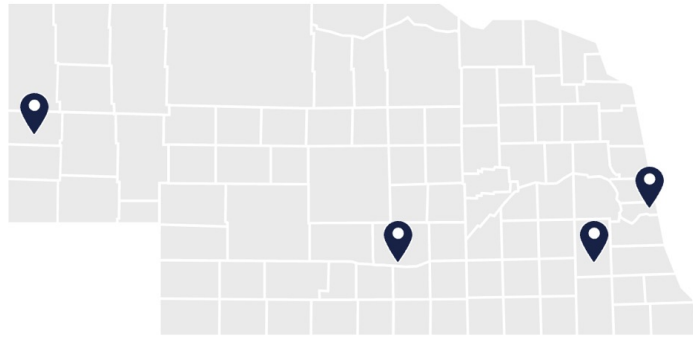
Constituent service is customer service, and serving Nebraska is my top priority. Government should provide high-quality customer service to all its citizens. When it doesn't, my team works to get results for Nebraskans. If you are having issues navigating the federal bureaucracy, we are ready to assist you.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES	
\$6,476,502	RETURNED TO NEBRASKANS
1,789	CONSTITUENT CASES RESOLVED
213	VETERANS ASSISTED
132	SOCIAL SECURITY CASES RESOLVED

CONTACT US

MY TEAM AND I ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU.

Contact us by phone at (202) 224-4224.
You can also view my website at www.ricketts.senate.gov/contact.



SCOTTSBLUFF

115 Railway St., Suite C102
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
(308) 632-6032

OMAHA

304 N. 168th Circle, Suite 213
Omaha, NE 68118
(402) 550-8040

LINCOLN

1248 'O' St., Suite 1000
Lincoln, NE 68508
(402) 476-1400

KEARNEY

4111 4th Ave., Suite 26
Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 233-3677

WASHINGTON, D.C.

139 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4224

FOLLOW ME ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@SenatorRicketts



NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

