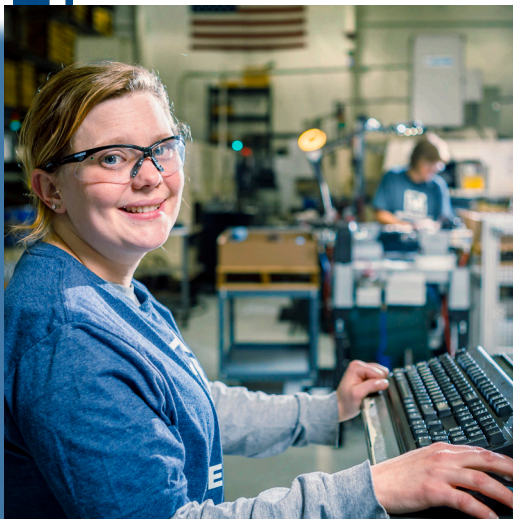


RESULTS FOR BUSINESS



Accelerate Our State

ACCELERATE OUR STATE

Dear NE Chamber Members:

Growing states are surviving and thriving states, and Nebraska is bulging at the seams. That's why we were laser-focused on policies that accelerate our state in the 2023 Nebraska legislative session. We're proud to report some critical results for business this year, including:

- Opening up opportunity with transformational tax relief;
- Fueling research and development investment;
- Driving growth in workforce recruitment and retention; and
- Empowering local communities.

For the past five years, NE Chamber members have been telling leaders in no uncertain terms what barriers their organizations and communities are facing on their road to growth. We're fortunate to have a class of leaders who have largely been responsive to our members.

We're one lap in to the Nebraska Legislature's two-year cycle. It's a good time to evaluate how far we've come and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Transformational Tax Relief

The culmination of our work has historically lied in tax reform – transforming Nebraska from a high- to a low-tax state. We've always known that when we relieve tax burden on Nebraska's makers, producers, and family businesses, we unleash growth – in our economy, jobs, quality of life and ultimately, population.

Years of hard work have paid off. From 2015 through 2029, Nebraska leaders will have enacted more than \$21 billion in tax relief and cuts, \$14.7 billion of which is dedicated to property tax relief.

By 2027, most Nebraskans and their employers will be enjoying a 3.99% income tax rate. Schools will see enhanced state funding, and Nebraskans will have received an extra \$3 billion in property tax relief.



More Results for Business

In addition to transformational tax relief, we made strides in addressing several other critical and emerging needs for Nebraska business.

- Promote tech-enabled manufacturing
- Enhance industry-education partnerships
- Launch economic competitiveness studies by the NE Chamber Foundation
- Graduate another class of strong community and state leaders
- Roll out Tech Nebraska to support tech-forward policy and statewide workforce
- Lead state and national coalitions to make the case for legal immigration reform
- Collaborate to boost college enrollment by 10%
- Expand use of workforce development funds for talent retention
- Extend Nebraska's Research & Development Tax Credit
- Create the first childcare tax credit for private entities
- Invest millions more in career and technical education
- Cut red tape in rural and middle-income housing programs


There's no stopping – we're only accelerating from here.

Historic economic resilience, conservative spending, investment in communities and tax cuts have cleared the way for a new era of growth and prosperity in Nebraska – an era of new families, growing communities, enhanced quality of life and global market leadership. We can't afford to let our foot off the gas pedal now. We must accelerate our state.

As always, our results are directly tied to your ongoing engagement and investment in our mission. We could not do it without you, and we need you now more than ever.

Thank you for the privilege of working for you and with you each year.

Best regards,



Bryan Slone
President

NECHAMBER **BY THE NUMBERS**

125

Cornerstone Members

16%

Growth in Sponsorships

4,465

Attendees at Statewide Events

156

Members Engaged in Policy Councils

Our members work side-by-side to identify the greatest challenges and opportunities facing Nebraska and its core sectors. We share best practices and problem-solve together. We discover new partnerships and grow as leaders.



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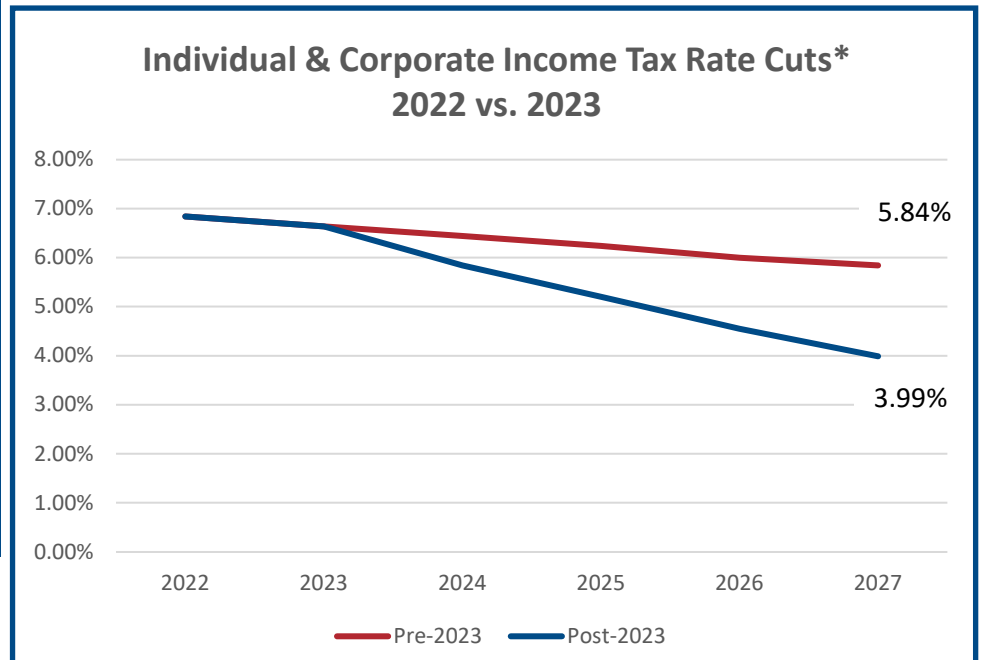
MODERNIZE TAXES

RESULTS

- ✓ Individual and corporate income tax rates will drop to 3.99% for most Nebraskans.
- ✓ All types of businesses will pay the same tax rates – parity.
- ✓ Property tax relief mechanisms will stay intact and be expanded.
- ✓ Key sales and use taxes are being modernized to meet evolving market needs.
- ✓ Military, federal and social security income exemptions will all be effective in 2024.

Between 2015 and 2023, Nebraska legislators had adopted **\$21.2 billion in tax relief** to be fully realized by 2029.

The highlight of those cuts for Nebraska’s businesses is an across-the-board reduction in the top two individual and corporate income tax rates to **3.99% by 2027** – an acceleration and expansion of 2022 tax cuts. By 2029, Nebraska should be at or near the **top 15** states with the most competitive tax rates.



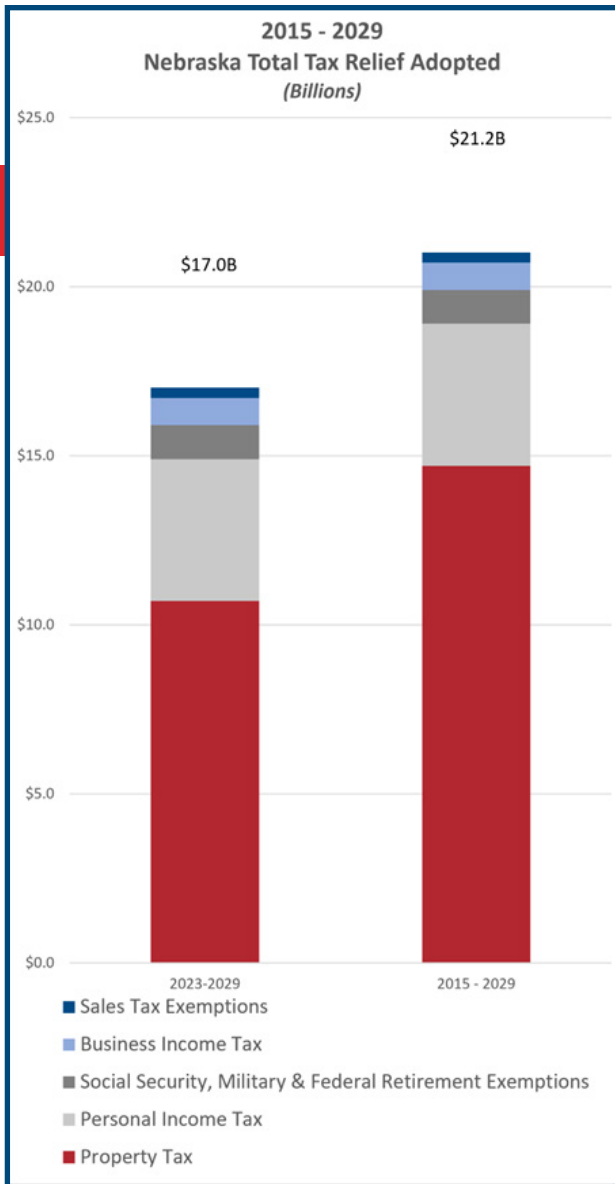
*Top two tax brackets (2023) – Individuals earning \$22,170+; Married earning \$44,350+; Corporations earning \$100,000+.

How does this affect my business?

1. You can take these new income tax rates to the bank.
2. Retiring federal and military talent have a strong incentive to move or stay in Nebraska.

2023 - 2027	
Income Tax Rates*	
2023	6.64%
2024	5.84%
2025	5.20%
2026	4.55%
2027	3.99%





Tax Results

Income Tax (LB754*/AM1405*)

Reduces top two individual and top corporate income tax rates in phases to 3.99% by tax year 2027; allows partnership taxpayers to pay income tax directly to the state on amended returns rather than pass through tax liability to its partners; exempts military, federal and social security income starting in tax year 2024.

Amendment 1405, which was defeated, proposed lesser tax cuts and higher bracket-based rates.

Property Tax (LB243*/LB818)

Increases funding for refundable income tax credit for property taxes paid to \$1 billion and removes 5% allowable growth cap; places caps on school district tax levying authority without a public vote; phases out levying authority for community colleges while increasing state budget allocations; adopts Tax Equalization and Review Commission changes to help expedite appeals or reduce taxpayer costs during long appeals.

Sales & Use Tax (LB727*)

Offers an income tax credit for food donations; creates a biodiesel tax credit for retail dealers.

In Progress

Property Valuation

Both the Governor and Revenue Committee have signaled an interest in addressing increasing property valuation costs.

State and Local Taxes (LB497)

Restores itemized deductions for state and local taxes (SALT)

Opposed & No Action in 2023

Consumption Tax (LB79)

A constitutional amendment for the 2024 ballot that repeals income, sales and property taxes and replaces them with a statewide retail consumption tax.

BY THE NUMBERS

**MODERNIZE
TAXES**

\$21.2B

Total Tax Relief
(2015 – 2029)

\$5.2B - Individual Income Tax
\$14.7B - Property Tax
\$800M - Corporate Income Tax
\$300M - Sales Tax



ADDRESS WORKFORCE

RESULTS

- ✓ Businesses can apply for workforce development funding, not only for recruiting and training workers, but also retaining talent.
- ✓ An extra \$10M in workforce recruitment and retention grants is available.
- ✓ Middle and high school students will benefit from more than \$5M in state funding for career and technical education.
- ✓ Students in high-demand fields are eligible for \$40M more in scholarships through 2025.
- ✓ Refugee immigrants can more easily travel between work and home.

After tax relief, Nebraska leaders turned to the next top priority of Nebraska businesses – **workforce**.

In total, they made a \$55 million commitment to workforce development through new recruitment and retention grants, career scholarships and career and technical education (CTE).

They also created a path for Nebraska’s refugee immigrants to apply for state driving privilege cards.



How does this affect my business?

1. If you haven't looked into the state's workforce development funding yet, this might be a good year.
2. With more transportation options, new immigrants, especially from Afghanistan and Ukraine, may be seeking jobs. Connect with a resettlement agency or nonprofit assisting with work readiness.
3. High school, community college and four-year students in high-demand fields can access state resources more than ever to pursue their education. Encourage your interns and apprentices to apply.

BY THE NUMBERS



800-1,000
New Refugees Eligible for
Nebraska Driving Privilege Cards

↑ **1.9-2.5%**
Higher Education Budgets
to Expand Enrollment
(2024 & 2025)

Workforce Results

<p>Workforce Training & Support (LB191*) Allows the Nebraska Training and Support Cash Fund to be used at Nebraska businesses for retention of existing employees in addition to training and recruitment already permitted.</p>
<p>Workforce Development Grants (Budget) \$10M to support the workforce development needs of Nebraska employers, including apprenticeships, internships, hiring incentives, job training, credentialing, certification and educational stipends.</p>
<p>Career & Technical Education (LB610/Budget) \$5M in state funds in addition to federal funding to support successful career and technical education programs in Nebraska's middle and high schools.</p>
<p>Career Scholarships (Budget) About \$20M annually through 2025 to Nebraska community colleges and private, nonprofit colleges to offer scholarships to students in high-demand fields. The program previously received a \$3M allocation.</p>
<p>Refugee Driving Privileges (LB138/AM837*) New refugee immigrants in Nebraska under legal, federal authorization may obtain a state driving privilege card. AM837 added the measure to the LB138 omnibus legislation.</p>
<p>Child Care Tax Credit (LB754*/LB318) \$15M annually in refundable income tax credits for families; \$7.5M for the School Readiness Tax Credit for childcare providers; \$2.5M in nonrefundable tax credits for private contributions to childcare.</p>
<p>Workforce Housing (LB249/LB191*/LB629/LB531) Expands eligibility for both the Rural Workforce Housing and Middle Income Workforce Housing matching grant programs.</p>
<p>Higher Education Funding (Budget) 1.9% - 2.5% budget growth, partially to help expand student enrollment initiatives.</p>

In Progress

<p>Remote Worker Taxation (LB416) Exempts non-resident remote worker income from Nebraska taxes until a de minimis threshold is met.</p>
<p>Federal Legal Immigration Reform Effectively and legally addresses our workforce shortage by maintaining effective border security, reforming and expanding work visa and temporary worker programs, and expanding legal immigration quotas.</p>
<p>Unemployment Eligibility (LB618) Make work-authorized aliens eligible to receive the unemployment benefits currently being paid by employers.</p>



Nebraska CTE (2021-2022)

100%

Public Schools Offer CTE

80%

7-12 Graders in at Least One Course

30%

9-12 Graders with CTE Concentrations
(2 courses in one cluster)

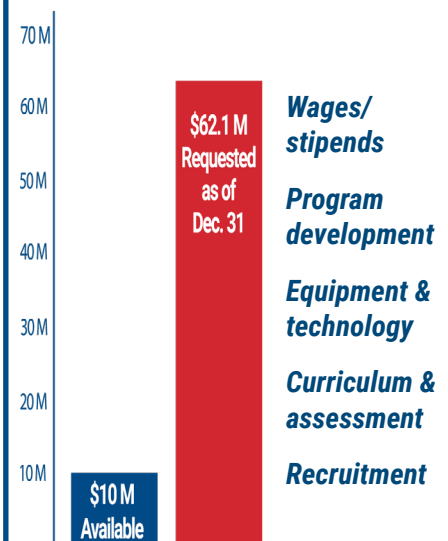
21,000

Students in Career &
Technical Student Organizations
(CTSO)

Source: NE Dept. of Education

2022 Demand for Workforce Retention, Recruitment & Development Grants

Employer demand for workforce grants last year exceeded available funding by six times.



DRIVE INNOVATION

RESULTS

- ✓ Nebraska's R&D Tax Credit remains intact through 2033.
- ✓ All manufacturers receive the same tax exemptions for equipment and facility upgrades.
- ✓ The legislature is studying the economic impact of manufacturing modernization to inform future action.
- ✓ Large, high-tech projects have the matching funds or access to economic incentives needed to locate in Nebraska.

Nebraska's **capacity to innovate** in a fast-paced global economy with a shortage of available talent is critical to long-term growth.

Nebraska leaders embraced this need by extending the state's research and development tax credit and ensuring sales and use tax exemptions for facility improvements extend to manufacturers of all sizes.

They also paved the way for attracting major high-tech projects to Nebraska, such as next-generation hydrogen hub and semiconductor manufacturing clusters.



How does this affect my business?

1. Factor the state's additional tax credits into your modeling if you are considering product enhancements or new product development.
2. Planning equipment or facility upgrades? Your project may be eligible for sales and use tax exemptions, even when third-party contractors do the purchasing.
3. A high-tech megaproject in Nebraska could attract new technology, skilled talent and high-paying jobs to propel economic growth.

Innovation Results

Nebraska Advantage Research & Development Tax Credit (LB727*/LB491)

Sales and use tax refunded or refundable income tax credit at 15% of federal R&D tax credit or 35% when partnering with a Nebraska college or university. Extended through 2033.

Sales & Use Tax Exemptions for Real Property Improvements (LB727*/LB74)

Extends sales and use tax exemptions to qualifying purchases for real property improvements when third-party contractors act as purchaser.

Semiconductor Manufacturing (LB92*/LB616/LB617)

Appropriates \$20M into the Nebraska Economic Development Cash Fund to attract a Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) for America Act project and makes such projects eligible for Nebraska's mainline economic incentive program.

Hydrogen Hub (LB565/LB568)

Allocates \$500K in grants for engineering and modeling that supports the state's application to become a U.S. Dept. of Energy regional clean energy hub. Establishes a working group to determine nuclear and hydrogen sector workforce needs.

Precision Agriculture Infrastructure Grants (LB361/LB814)

Appropriates \$2M for grants incentivizing precision agriculture connectivity, sustainability, traceability, and autonomy.

Manufacturing Modernization (LR123)

A resolution introduced by the Legislature to study the economic impact of manufacturing automation and high-tech industry.

Insurance Regulatory Sandbox Act (LB587/LB814)

Allows temporary testing of innovative insurance products or services without otherwise being licensed or authorized to act under the laws of the state.

In Progress

Manufacturing Modernization Tax Credit Support (LB582)

Creates a targeted, pilot grant program that aids the smallest to largest manufacturing employers across the state through technology transformation.

Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Amortization Schedule for Research and Experimentation Expenses (LB492)

Decouples state amortization schedule from the federal structure for R&E expenses, effectively extending that portion of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act in Nebraska. *(Pursuing parallel effort in U.S. Congress)*



BY THE NUMBERS

10 Years

Nebraska Advantage R&D
Tax Credit Extended

One Study

Economic Impact
Manufacturing Modernization

**Two High-Tech
Industries**

Funding for Hydrogen
Hub & Semiconductor
Manufacturing

**One
Exemption**

Sales & Use Tax to
Modernize Real Property
Using Contractors

↓ \$40K

Livestock Modernization
Grant Threshold

\$2M

Precision Agriculture
Infrastructure Grants



EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITIES

RESULTS

- ✓ Nebraska's new childcare tax credit will help support working families.
- ✓ Less red tape in workforce housing and broadband programs, plus expanded eligibility.
- ✓ Communities gain flexibility in executing redevelopment plans.
- ✓ Public-private partnerships can better fuel growth in childcare, transportation and water infrastructure.

More than ever, attracting and retaining talent is closely tied to each community's ability to attract, accommodate, and retain new residents and families.

This year, legislators helped empower communities with targeted action in local housing, childcare, healthcare, broadband, and recreation solutions.

They created the state's first childcare tax credit, paved the way for more public-private partnerships to address workforce needs, and cut red tape to expand eligibility of workforce housing programs. They also raised Medicare reimbursement rates for critical access hospitals and more.



How does this affect my business?

1. Your employees are now eligible for a childcare tax credit from the state to help address affordability.
2. Interested in expanding childcare in your community? Consider the new refundable tax credit for private contributions.
3. Housing options may grow in your community under new eligibility and streamlined redevelopment programs.
4. Some highway and water infrastructure projects may be expedited with the availability alternative funding options.

BY THE NUMBERS

↑ \$25M

Childcare Tax Credits for Parents, Providers & Private Investors

↑ \$5M

New Grant Maximum Rural Workforce Housing Fund

↑ \$330K

Top Home Value Middle Income Workforce Housing

One

State Broadband Office & Director

↑ \$90M

Local Shovel-Ready Projects Grants



Community Results

Child Care Tax Credit (LB754*/LB318)

\$15M annually in refundable income tax credits for families; \$7.5M for the School Readiness Tax Credit for childcare providers; \$2.5M in non-refundable tax credits for private contributions to childcare.

Expanded Childcare Assistance for Working Families (LB227*/LB35)

Extends expanded access to state childcare assistance, better allowing families to transition off the program as they advance in their careers.

Workforce Housing (LB249/LB191*/LB629/LB531*)

Expands eligibility for both the Rural Workforce Housing and Middle Income Workforce Housing matching grant programs.

Micro-TIF Streamlining (LB531*/LB98)

Allows cities to adopt expedited review of Micro-TIF (tax increment financed) redevelopment plans and approve multiple projects within one blighted area study and public hearing. Applies retroactively if desired.

Revitalize Rural Nebraska Grant Program (LB531*/LB45)

Provides \$1M for grants to demolish dilapidated commercial property in first- and second-class cities and villages.

Medicaid Reimbursement (LB227*)

Requires the state to rebase inpatient per diem rates every two years using the most recent audited Medicare cost report; offers per diem rates to hospitals when a patient awaits transfer into a nursing facility or there is no public guardian.

Broadband (LB683/LB412/LB359)

Allows opening of Broadband Bridge grants throughout the year; allows for broadband grants from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund for an entire exchange area, including a second-class city or village and surrounding rural areas.

Nebraska Highway Bond Act (LB727*/LB706)

Allows bond financing through the issuance of highway bonds to accelerate Build Nebraska Act projects and extends the Build Nebraska Act.

Water Infrastructure Construction (LB565*/LB723)

Allows alternative project delivery methods, including construction manager/general contractor, design-build and progressive design-build, and public-private partnerships to secure financing.

Shovel-Ready Capital Recovery & Investment Act (Budget)

\$90M in matching grants available for arts, humanities, entertainment and sports complex projects delayed by the pandemic.

Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Revitalization Act (LB727*/LB697)

The act (Nebraska Historic Tax Credits) was extended through 2031 to support both commercial and residential downtown revitalization plans, with higher tax credits up to a \$12M cap annually.

In Progress

U.S. Highways 75 and 81 (LB212/LB454)

Requires the state to plan, design and purchase rights-of-way for full expansion of these highways from two to four lanes and appropriates funding to pave all remaining unpaved highways.

Protect Our Business Climate

How does this affect my business?

1. **Nebraska ranks #2 best regulatory and tort environment for business.** (*Forbes, 2022; Pacific Research Institute, 2015*)
2. **#2 highest GDP Growth in Q1, 2023** (*Bureau of Economic Analysis*)
3. **Nebraska is the #8 most business friendly state** (*CNBC, 2023*)

State leaders upheld Nebraska's reputation as one of the nation's **top states for business** by doubling down on their commitment to keeping regulatory burden and the cost of doing business in check.

The NE Chamber was instrumental in helping promote free markets and preserve our competitive business climate, as well as defeat proposals that threaten the economy and job creation.

Business Climate Results

Unemployment Regulation (LB191*/LB666)

Modernizes unemployment determinations of liability and combined tax rates with options for online or mailed notifications. Expands options to change elections and submit voluntary contributions.

Insurance Regulatory Sandbox Act (LB587/LB814)

Allows temporary testing of innovative insurance products or services without otherwise being licensed or authorized to act under the laws of the state.

In Progress

Wage and Hour Act Changes for Youth and Training Wages (LB15)

Sets a minimum youth wage (14-17) and a minimum training wage.

Workers' Compensation 1st Reports of Injury Confidentiality (LB191)

Protects worker confidentiality at first reports of injury.

Wage and Hour Act amendments regarding COLA Limitations (LB327)

Controls the rate of minimum wage growth to the lesser of 1.5% or CPI increases each year after 2026 (once the new minimum wage hits \$15/hour) so businesses and employers have more certainty as they plan for wage increases.

Opposed & No Action in 2023

Hazardous & Toxic Chemicals (LB7)

Institutes a 10-year statute of limitations for exposure to hazardous or toxic chemicals.

Punitive Damages (LB25)

Authorizes punitive damages and provides for distribution.

Criminal Record Checks for Employment (LB367)

Prevents employers of 15 or more from inquiring about criminal records prior to hiring unless otherwise required by federal law.

Consumption Tax (LB79)

A constitutional amendment for the 2024 ballot that repeals income, sales and property taxes and replaces them with a statewide consumption tax.

Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act (LB57)

Establishes a paid leave insurance program beyond what is required by federal law.

Workplace Privacy Act (LB161)

Prevents location tracking of employees except for the purposes of contact tracing during a national emergency.

HOW YOUR SENATOR VOTED

Senator	LB754 (Page 5)	LB243 (Page 5)	LB727 (Page 5)	LB191 (Page 7, 11 & 12)	AM837 to LB138 (Page 7)	LB92 (Page 9)	LB227 (Page 11)	LB531 (Page 11)	LB565 (Page 11)	AM1405 to LB754 (Page 5)
Raymond Aguilar	✓	✓	✓	✓	?		✓	✓	✓	✓
Joni Albrecht	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
John Arch	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Christy Armendariz	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Beau Ballard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carol Blood	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✗
Carolyn Bosn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Eliot Bostar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?
Bruce Bostelman	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
Tom Brandt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Tom Brewer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tom Briese	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	?
John Cavanaugh	✗	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Machaela Cavanaugh	✗	?	?	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✗
Robert Clements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
Danielle Conrad	?	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Jen Day	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?	✓	✗
Wendy DeBoer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Barry DeKay	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Myron Dorn	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Robert Dover	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	?
George Dungan	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Steve Erdman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
John Fredrickson	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Steve Halloran	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
Ben Hansen	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brian Hardin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Rick Holdcroft	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jana Hughes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Megan Hunt	✗	✗	?	?	✓	✓	?	?	?	✗
Teresa Ibach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	?
Mike Jacobson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kathleen Kauth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lou Ann Linehan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Loren Lippincott	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
John Lowe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Mike McDonnell	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Terrell McKinney	?	?	?	✓	?	✓	?	✓	?	✗
Mike Moser	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dave Murman	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jane Raybould	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Merv Riepe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓
Rita Sanders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Julie Slama	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Tony Vargas	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Brad R von Gillern	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lynne Walz	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	?	✗
Justin Wayne	?	✓	?	?	?	✓	?	?	?	✗
Anna Wishart	✓	✓	?	✓	?	✓	✓	✓	?	✗

KEY: ✓ Supported NE Chamber Policy ✗ Opposed NE Chamber Policy ? Did Not Vote

NE CHAMBER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



Meet Tera Norris
President, NE Chamber Foundation

Tera Norris leads the NE Chamber Foundation's work to expand economic opportunity in Nebraska through nonpartisan research and leadership development initiatives focused on the core drivers of economic prosperity.

A Peru native, she served as President of Junior Achievement (JA) of Lincoln since 2010, strengthening the organization's impact and partnerships in a 10-county region. She was also instrumental in helping grow programs in Beatrice, Seward, Grand Island and Kearney. She currently lives in Lincoln with her husband and two sons.

The NE Chamber Foundation directs and finances nonpartisan economic research on performance outcomes to help inform policymakers and identify emerging business and industry trends requiring NE Chamber leadership. We also ensure the longevity and success of Leadership Nebraska and the Nebraska Business Hall of Fame College Scholarship Program.

BY THE NUMBERS

One
New President

Three
Economic Studies Launched

- State Competitiveness
- Legal Immigration
- Manufacturing Automation

140
Total Leaders in Nebraska
Business Hall of Fame

\$238K
Total College Scholarships
for Rising Business Leaders

Building a Stronger Future for Nebraska through Public Policy Research

In 2023, the NE Chamber Foundation retained economic and strategic planning consulting firm, Economic Leadership, to perform three major analyses to help guide the state's economic path forward – an economic competitiveness report, an evaluation of the state's workforce needs and opportunities through legal immigration, and an assessment of the economic impact of automation in Nebraska's manufacturing sector.

In the meantime, the Foundation's Nebraska Dashboard for Economy and Workforce keeps tabs on the state's latest economic indicators – market, GDP, sector trends, population growth, wages, cost of living and more.



Ted Abernathy, Economic Leadership

LEADERSHIP NEBRASKA

A NECHAMBER FOUNDATION PROGRAM



Meet Tara Lea
Director, Leadership Nebraska

Tara Lea leads the NE Chamber Foundation's work to support the development of current and emerging leaders across the state.

A native of Hooper, NE, Tara previously served as president/CEO of the Fremont and Ralston Area Chambers of Commerce. She has served on the board and is a past chair of the NE Chambers Association and the Mid-America Chamber Executives organization. She graduated from the U.S. Chamber Institute for Organizational Management in 2021 and Leadership Nebraska Class VII. Until joining the NE Chamber Foundation, she remained active in the Leadership Nebraska Alumni Advisory Council. She currently lives in Omaha with her husband, son and daughter.

Leadership Nebraska immerses rising leaders in Nebraska's vibrant economy, communities and policymaking process, helps them build their network across the state, and supports their commitment to civic engagement.

BY THE NUMBERS

335

**Total Leadership
 Nebraska Alumni**

13

**Communities
 Showcased**

One

**New
 Director**

Invest now!

The Nebraska State Chamber Foundation (NE Chamber Foundation) is a 501(c)(3) charitable and education foundation.

We strive to be the leader in Nebraska for future-focused research and a catalyst for positive change. But we need your help to secure our future!

Visit nechamber.com/foundation to give.

Thank you to our FOUNDATION Supporters



NE CHAMBER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

NE MANUFACTURING ALLIANCE

We deliver customized and peer-driven solutions to meet the specialized workforce and industry 4.0 needs of Nebraska's critical manufacturing sector. We drive statewide gains in productivity and enhanced quality of life. We ensure Nebraska products and talent compete and win in the global marketplace.

Collaboration and coordination brought definite advantages over the last year, as NE Manufacturing Alliance members identified and advocated for legislation specific to their needs, including more career and technical education funding and a study on the economic impact of manufacturing 4.0 in Nebraska. Under NE Chamber coordination, the sector's first statewide marketing campaign – Manufacturing the Good Life – was launched, manufacturers hosted legislators on tours, and awards and contests strengthened the sector's reputation with Nebraskans.

BY THE NUMBERS

750

NE Manufacturers
Receiving Updates

Five

Proactive
Manufacturing Bills

One

Manufacturing Council
Re-Energized

Two

Working Groups

- Workforce
- Manufacturing 4.0

20K

Votes for Coolest Thing
Made in Nebraska



POWERED BY  NECHAMBER AND  Nebraska Public Power District
Together with your local public power utility.

The inaugural year of the NE Manufacturing Alliance's COOLEST THING MADE IN NEBRASKA contest was a big hit. Garnering more than 20,500 votes, the head-to-head, bracket-style competition encouraged students, educators, manufacturers and their employees, and all Nebraskans to vote for the victor.

Nebraska Public Power District has teamed up with the NE Manufacturing Alliance and NE Chamber to sponsor the contest in 2023.



Kawasaki Motors Mfg. Corp took home the trophy in 2022 with its New York City Transit Authority's R211 rail car, manufactured in Lincoln.



Meet Laurel Oetken
Executive Director, Tech Nebraska

Laurel Oetken provides strategic leadership that supports the growth, sustainability and global competitiveness of Nebraska's technology-based economy. She is a key player in driving innovation and growth through collaboration, education and policy.

A native of Omaha, Laurel previously served as director of entrepreneurship and innovation at the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce and spearheaded the Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (REAP) to strengthen the area's innovation ecosystem. She continues to live in Omaha.



We unite and strengthen Nebraska's statewide technology community by helping drive industry growth, and we position the state as a leader in the future of technology and innovation. We advocate for tech-forward public policies and support the development of a diverse, talented workforce.

BY THE NUMBERS

One

**Statewide Association
Launched**

One

**Executive Director
Hired**



Challenge & Solution

To move into the top tier of the nation's technology ecosystem, it will take the collective effort of tech leaders from across Nebraska, from all industries.

Formed in 2023 in partnership with the NE Chamber, Tech Nebraska will:

- Convene and connect Nebraska's tech community and leaders
- Promote growth in Nebraska's technology and business communities
- Promote greater technology innovation and enablement of Nebraska's core industries
- Grow a skilled and diverse technology community
- Influence legislation on federal, state and local levels

NE CHAMBER STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS



Meet Jim Sutfin
Education Consultant

Dr. Jim Sutfin is a grant-funded, independent consultant for the NE Chamber, focused on enhancing public-private partnerships in Nebraska career and technical education (CTE). He serves as a liaison to the NE Dept. of Education and engages education leaders in strategic discussions to build and scale CTE and education solutions to help meet state workforce needs.

Dr. Sutfin retired from public education in 2022 after a successful career, from a science teacher in Bellevue Public Schools to superintendent of Millard Public Schools. He has been recognized for his teaching and leadership on several occasions, including Superintendent of the Year in 2020. He has two grown children, and he continues to live with his wife in Omaha.

Activated only six months ago, we build partnerships between business leaders and state and local educators to enhance and scale the student experience in career and technical education (CTE), build STEM skills, connect students with Nebraska employers, and ensure student career success.

BY THE NUMBERS

\$5M

Additional Funding
for CTE

One

NE Dept. of
Education Liaison

500

Educators & CTE
Advocates Hear From
Business at Conference

Three

Community Colleges
Engaging Manufacturers in
Apprenticeships

Why CTE Matters

"CTE programs have had a positive effect on Dramco's growth. We have had 10 high school students who work at Dramco part-time in the apprenticeship program, and six of those students are continuing to post-secondary training to return to Dramco as full-time employees."

"Currently, over 75% of our employees have graduated from post-secondary CTE programs. This pipeline of employees often starts in high school and has allowed Dramco to grow – which in turn has grown other operations that rely on our goods and services."

Justin Pfenning - Co-Owner, Dramco, Grand Island

Career & Technical Education Impact

Exposing more K-12 students to STEM fields, technical skills and trades aligns with state priorities to recruit and retain healthcare, manufacturing, technology construction and engineering, logistics and agricultural talent. CTE funds support these student professional organizations in Nebraska.



POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

We recruit and support business-minded legislative candidates who are critical to maintaining momentum on a long-term workforce and growth agenda. Term limits cause high turnover and limited pools of available candidates. Without sufficient financial support, these candidates will not succeed.

"The funding and experience needed to campaign for office is quickly becoming a barrier to entry for strong leaders – more today than in decades past."



"Bold, economic-minded leaders make game-changing decisions. It's time for NE Chamber members to consider how we can better support them."

Scott Moore

*SVP – Corporate Relations and Chief Administrative Officer, Union Pacific
NE Chamber Past Chair, Former Nebraska Secretary of State and State Senator*

BY THE NUMBERS

\$138K For Business-minded Candidates in 2022

24 Candidates Supported

21 Candidates Won Election



Strong Business. Strong Communities.

Comprised of more than 50 local chamber leaders and supporters, the NE Chambers Association is a critical strategic partner for the NE Chamber. Through this network, more than 12,000 businesses stay connected with state leaders, each other, and new policies affecting growth.

In 2023, three local chambers were recognized by the Mid-America Chamber Executives with best-in-class awards.



The NE Chambers Association works alongside the NE Chamber to:

- Develop well-informed statewide leaders;
- Raise influence and visibility of local chambers across the state;
- Develop strategies to attract new residents, visitors, and investors to our communities;
- Offer professional development and support to chamber executives;
- Ensure future prosperity offered by a pro-business climate; and
- Represent the unified voice of the local business community.





WHO WE ARE

We are where business leaders gather to make Nebraska the best place to own, operate and grow a business. We are the largest broad-based business association in Nebraska, with a thousand members in all corners of the state.

WHAT WE DO

We deliver economic and workforce growth, a competitive business climate and a network of leaders with the connections and know-how to help your business succeed.

HOW WE SUCCEED

Our activist members drive our results. Bold leadership, relentless advocacy and statewide engagement make us successful.

Unlock the benefits of NE Chamber membership today!

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