



OTOC's Questions to Unicameral Candidates in Dt. 7, 9 and 13 September 29, 2016



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Expanding Medicaid to cover Nebraskans caught in the coverage gap

About 97,000 low income working Nebraskans fall into the coverage gap—they earn too much to qualify for traditional Medicaid and too little to qualify for premium reduction under the Affordable Care Act? *Yes or No, do you support expanding Medicaid in Nebraska to cover these Nebraskans? If no, what options or other solutions do you offer?*

Improving Prison and Community Mental Health Care and Drug Treatment

Recent studies have shown that over 80% of prison inmates have mental illness or substance abuse disorders, yet our prisons lack 30% of the mental health and treatment staff they need. Likewise, a 2015 study found 9 major gaps in the behavioral care system in the Omaha area. The Unicameral has authorized two interim studies to understand how to address this problem. *Will you work with OTOC to improve mental health care across Nebraska, including providing adequate funding for mental health and substance abuse treatment in correctional facilities and in our communities?*

Expanding the “Problem solving Courts” to keep people out of prison

In passing LB 919 in 2016, the Unicameral specifically declared "that when left untreated substance abuse disorders and mental illness contribute to millions of dollars in lost productivity, and contribute to the burden placed on law enforcement, courts and correctional systems in Nebraska." LB 919 authorized the creation of more kinds of “problem-solving courts” to include courts dedicated to veterans, mental health, driving under the influence and reentry. *Will you work with OTOC to assure that the State of Nebraska actually funds and establishes mental health and veterans courts in Douglas County within the next two years?*

Adopting Fair Tax Policy and to Eliminate our Structural Budget Deficit

Because of past decisions by the Unicameral and Governor to grant tax exemptions, tax credits and other forms of tax relief for various interests, Nebraska now has an ongoing, structural deficit, meaning we collect too little in taxes to cover the legitimate needs of our citizens.

During what has been a strong economy with low unemployment, there is a projected \$113 Million deficit for 2017 and \$350 Million by 2019. The Governor has proposed an 8% cut in the budgets of most state agencies. *What are two things you would you do to correct the problem of our ongoing, structural deficit?*

Reducing Green House Gas Emissions and promoting renewable energy

In their 2014 study, (*Understanding and Assessing Climate Change. Implications for Nebraska*), UNL climate scientists stated that climate change is real and is already affecting our state. *Will you work with OTOC during in this upcoming session to establish Nebraska law to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support policies to expand renewable energy sources, including solar and wind energy, in Nebraska?*

Retain the Repeal of the Death Penalty

Will you stand with OTOC and vote to RETAIN the Unicameral's decision to abolish the death penalty and replace it with life in prison without possibility of parole?

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