

CITY COUNCIL AT LARGE



Tom Beckius



Bennie Shobe



Sandra Washington



Vanessa Emlich

AIRPORT AUTHORITY

CONGRATULATIONS!

LINCOLN SCHOOL BOARD



John Goodwin
DISTRICT 1



Barbara Baier
DISTRICT 3



Mara Krivohlavek
DISTRICT 5



Marilyn Johnson-Farr
DISTRICT 7

Victory for Lincoln!

Democrats Sweep City Elections 🗳️

I am thrilled to announce that our Democratic candidates have swept the Lincoln City Elections!

Lincoln voters made their voices heard loud and clear, electing a strong, diverse slate of candidates and overwhelmingly endorsing fair housing reforms. I am so proud of the hard work and dedication shown by each of our candidates—they have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to building a better Lincoln for everyone.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the countless volunteers and supporters who made this victory possible. Whether you knocked on doors, made phone calls, sent texts, wrote postcards, or supported in other ways, your dedication powered a robust Get Out The Vote campaign. This clean sweep is thanks to you.

With these victories, Lincoln is poised to advance policies that prioritize fairness, opportunity, and community well-being. Our city will continue to thrive under the leadership of experienced, common-sense representatives on the City Council, Lincoln Public School Board, and Airport Authority Board. The Lancaster County Democratic Party is immensely

proud of this success and looks forward to working with our newly elected leaders to shape a brighter future for Lincoln.

Congratulations to our elected Democrats: Lincoln City Council At-Large:

Tom Beckius
Bennie Shobe
Sandra Washington

Lincoln Airport Authority: Vanessa Emlich

Lincoln Public School Board:

District 1: John Goodwin
District 3: Barbara Baier
District 5: Mara Krivohlavek
District 7: Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Farr

Thank you, Lincoln, for your trust in Democratic leadership. Together, we'll keep moving Lincoln forward—stronger, fairer, and more united than ever.

Hannah Wroblewski
Chair, Lancaster County Democratic Party

Election Night Party

May 6, 2025

Photos on these two pages are from the General Election Party, held at the Hub Cafe on May 6, 2025.



Clean sweep!! 🧹

LCDP Chair Hannah Wroblewski



Councilor Tom Beckius and
LCDP Chair Hannah Wroblewski



Lin Quenzer and supporters watching candidates
address the crowd



Councilor Bennie Shobe and
LCDP Chair Hannah Wroblewski



Tom Beckius, Sändra Washington, Bennie Shobe,
Barbara Baier, Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Farr, and Vanessa
Emlich waiting to speak while LCDP Chair Hannah
Wroblewski announces the unofficial final results at
10:15 pm



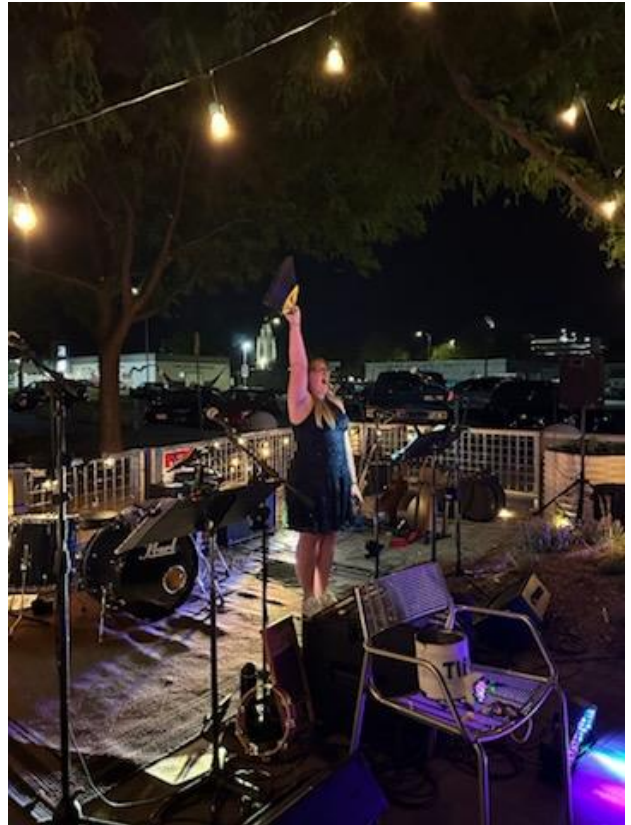
LCDP Fundraising Committee Chair Donna Baur and NDP Intern Valeria Ramirez



Supporters watching candidates address the crowd



LCDP Chair Hannah Wroblewski and NDP Executive Director Precious McKesson announcing election results 9:15pm



LCDP Chair Hannah Wroblewski announcing a Democratic Party sweep



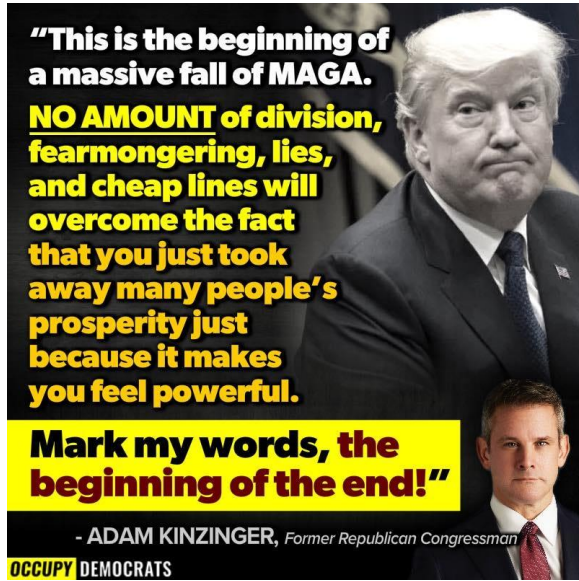
Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Farr talking to her Campaign Manager Trent Kadavy and supporters



The Algorhythms

The Tide Is Turning! We're Winning!

By Dennis Crawford



The tide has turned in the battle against Trump and MAGA.

April 1, 2025 will forever be remembered as a turning point in the battle against MAGA and Trump. The Democrats had a very good election night which bodes well for 2026, and Cory Booker fired up Democrats with a 25-hour Senate floor speech. There is no reason for Democrats to be demoralized or pessimistic about our electoral future. Forward.

The excellent Political Wire site did a good job in analyzing our big win in Wisconsin: Susan Crawford's decisive 10-point win in the Wisconsin Supreme Court race marks a stunning 11-point shift in Democrats' favor compared to Kamala Harris's narrow loss in the state just last cycle. It's the clearest sign yet that the political winds may be shifting in Democrats' favor.

That kind of swing isn't a one-off either. It lines up almost exactly with the national average Democrats are seeing in special elections this year — which is also 11 percentage points.

Crucially, turnout in Wisconsin was sky-high — reaching roughly 75% of presidential-year levels. That undercuts the idea that Democratic gains are merely a function of low-turnout anomalies. Some voters in Wisconsin didn't just show up — they changed their minds and voted for the other party.

And then there's Elon Musk. The billionaire inserted himself squarely into the race, casting it as a referendum on the "future of civilization." Instead, voters saw it as a referendum on him — and it backfired badly.

While Republicans may covet Musk's money and online megaphone, it's increasingly clear he's a liability in actual elections. Crawford's internal polling showed her ahead, but nowhere near the 10-point blowout that materialized after Musk's loud entry into the race."

The bottom line here is that Musk's threats to spend millions to oust dissenting Republicans in primaries and Democrats in the general election are not nearly as ominous as previously thought. The more voters get to know him, the less they like him.

The Republicans and many of the pundits in the "liberal" mainstream media wrote the Democrats' political obituary [again] as recently as March 16 when a NBC poll indicated that the Democrats had a 27% approval rating. Largely overlooked was the Republicans' 36% approval rating.

That low approval rating for the Democrats reveals a lot of dissatisfaction among Democrats with their party leaders. Nevertheless, that approval rating misses the fact that Democrats are highly motivated and will turn out for Democratic candidates in crucial elections. We may not be perfect, but the GOP is nuts.

CNN political analyst Ron Brownstein did a pretty good job in explaining why the Democrats' low approval rating doesn't mean much. Instead, it's the president's approval rating that matters in off year elections. An out party with a low approval rating will win off year elections when the president is unpopular. From Brownstein:

"Democrats are sounding the alarm over a cluster of recent polls showing that the party's public image is more bruised and battered than at any point in decades.

Looking across recent midterm elections, there's no evidence that such broad measures of party favorability have influenced the outcome in any consistent way. For instance, the Democrats' image in most polls was at least as favorable as (and sometimes more favorable than) the Republicans' in both 2010 and 2014 — and the GOP achieved historic landslides in those midterm elections anyway.

The best evidence shows that attitudes toward the incumbent president are now exerting far more influence on midterm election results than views about the party out of the White House. What's more, the historical record suggests the best way for the opposition party to raise its own standing is to weaken the president's position.

That means the Democrats' best chance to recover before 2026 likely depends less on their

efforts to refurbish their own image than on their ability to crystallize public discontent with the actions by President Donald Trump and the Republicans who control both chambers of Congress.

"The Democratic party having the lowest negative rating in 30 years has consequence, but midterm elections are about the status of the economy, direction of the country, and presidential approval," said longtime Republican pollster Bill McInturff. "Trump's job approval before the election will tell us a lot more about the outcome of 2026 than the rating of the Democratic party."

In most recent mid-term election cycles, the incumbent presidents' approval ratings were mired in the low to mid-40s. That would explain the big wins for the out party in the 1994, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018 election cycles. Buyer's remorse among a critical mass of voters set in shortly after the presidential election cycle.

Already, significant buyer's remorse has set in regarding the 2024 election of Trump and the MAGA Republican Congress. Trump's approval ratings are already in the low 40s and they will continue to fall. We have reached a turning point in voter sentiment.

E.J. Dionne said it well with a recent post on social media:

"Wisconsin + Florida + Booker = Turning Point

Susan Crawford's Wisconsin win is a huge rebuke to Elon Musk. He tried to buy Republican turnout. He motivated Democratic turnout instead.

Republicans, not Democrats, are in denial. Slavish loyalty to Trump will have big 2026 costs."

Already, the Republicans are fearing a mid-term blowout. After Tuesday night's elections, Republicans are starting to worry that Trump's erratic and inflationary policies will lead to a blue wave. "I think the results are fairly indicative of what we normally see in special elections when it comes to the party of a newly elected president. I expected to see an uptick in Dem turnout and some inattention by the GOP after a November victory," said Representative Don Bacon (R-Neb.).

The meltdown of the economy and the stock market due to Trump's radical tariffs will accentuate this trend of voter opposition to Trump's enablers in the Congress. "I think if this keeps up the Senate might be in play. And frankly I think we should respect red state voters enough to give them an alternative to this shit show." Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI.).

If you are a Democrat with any ambition of running for office, you should immediately start planning your 2026 campaign. If this disaster continues, it will (unfortunately) be the best political environment for you to run in for the rest of your life. The environment will most likely resemble 1932 when

Roosevelt and the Democratic Party won a landslide victory across the board.

I currently have nothing to offer you but toil, tears and sweat. We have hard days ahead of us. If we do the work, we will win and take back our country. Let's go!

Sources consulted:
consulted:

Democrats have image problems. That may not matter much in 2026 | CNN Politics

Cries of alarm are reverberating among Democrats over a cluster of recent polls showing that the party's public image...
www.cnn.com

consulted:

Democrats have image problems. That may not matter much in 2026 | CNN Politics

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www.cnn.com

Our Dirty Water

By [Yanqi Xu](#)

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Standing in front of a big screen, Nick Herringer claps in time with a metronome. He draws lines on the screen, repeating patterns drawn by the computer. He identifies icons of cars when they flash before his eyes. This is the 22-year-old's speech and cognitive therapy, which he has been doing at least twice a week. Every week. For three years.

Nick's thick brown hair hides a massive, ear-to-ear scar from his four brain surgeries for glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer he has battled since he was a teenager. The lifelong Nebraska football fan had to quit playing football his freshman year at Hastings High School after his doctor told him: Your brain can't withstand the hits.

His mom, Tammy Herringer, drives Nick to therapy and back to the quiet country home his dad Jay Herringer built for the family. She takes Nick along shopping and to community events because he can't go alone after the cancer and a car accident that further damaged his brain.

"I have worn the paths back and forth to town all these years," Tammy said.

Recently driving the gravel road from Hastings to their house northwest of town, she could barely

peer beyond the endless rows of golden corn plants on both sides of the road, mile after mile, standing tall in the scorching sun.

This corn is the main crop of the number one industry in Nebraska. It's a plant so important to the state that it's in the name of Nick's favorite team: The Cornhuskers. And it's corn – what we spray onto it to make it thrive – that experts say may be the culprit behind many pediatric cancers like Nick's.

Nitrogen fertilizer powers the corn's growth. It also converts to nitrate as it seeps into the soil – right into the Herringers' water and the drinking water of many Nebraskans.

This problem costs serious taxpayer money: Cities and small towns have spent untold millions of dollars treating the water they supply to their residents, struggling and sometimes failing to meet the Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water standard of 10 parts per million.

Fifty-nine of Nebraska's 500-odd community public water systems have violated the EPA standard at least once since 2010. Those who live in the country and get their water from private wells, like the Herringers, continue to bear the cost of treating their own nitrate-laced water.

This problem is growing worse: The statewide median nitrate level has doubled since 1978. Despite this, state and local governments have taken little action to regulate the farming practices that lead to nitrate leaching, say experts and local officials from both parties.

These authorities have never fined or stopped someone who is using too much nitrogen fertilizer, multiple leaders of Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts told the *Flatwater Free Press*.

And this problem may have serious consequences for Nebraskans, including its youngest residents.

Nebraska has the seventh-highest pediatric cancer rate in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It has the highest pediatric cancer rate of any state west of Pennsylvania.

High nitrate levels are closely linked to colorectal cancer, according to a leading expert at the National Cancer Institute. They are connected to thyroid disease. They're associated with neural tube defects, a birth defect of the brain or spine that often kills young children who have it.

Pregnant people can be potentially harmed by ingesting nitrates, experts say, spurring complications including anemia, premature labor and miscarriage.

And the risks may be increasing for Nebraskans, roughly 85% of whom use groundwater. Nearly one-fifth of Nebraska now has an estimated

nitrate level above 5 parts per million. That's the third highest in the United States.

Nick had drunk this water for years as a child. He has showered in it and eaten food cooked in it all his life.

That whole time, the Herringer family had no idea that their private well had tested at a nitrate level of 30 parts per million in 2010. That's 10 times the amount of nitrate that Eleanor Rogan, a top University of Nebraska Medical Center researcher now examining the link between high nitrate and childhood cancers, says she would allow small children to drink.

The Herringer's water was worse than 99% of the wells then tested in and around Hastings, a few years before the family got the grim news in 2015: Nick had cancer.

When Nick and Tammy recently arrived home from one of Nick's fall speech therapy appointments, they bumped into well driller Eric Jensen. Jensen had just finished putting chlorine in their well. He told Tammy that high nitrate is common around Hastings, pointing to the nearby feedlot in Juanita and those cornfields that surround her house as culprits.

Drilling a new well won't solve the problem, he said. There's only one way to remove nitrate from their tap water, the well driller told the mother: Install a complex filtration system.

It's about \$1,000. But he said it's worth it.

"Nitrate ain't good," he told Tammy.

Nick was perfectly healthy growing up. So Tammy thought it was strange when he asked to stay home from school because of a headache in 2015. Tylenol did little to help.

He started complaining about the sunlight being so bright that he had to wear sunglasses all the time. He vomited inside a Walgreens kiosk as Tammy printed photos. He vomited several times at home. His headache would come back after he stopped taking his nausea medication and steroids prescribed by the doctor. After seeing little improvement for about three weeks, Tammy drove him to the emergency room.

There, a doctor did a CT scan and showed them the results: an orange-sized mass on Nick's brain. They wheeled him into an ambulance and rushed him to Omaha. The diagnosis: a grade 4 brain tumor, the most aggressive form of primary brain cancers. Most glioblastoma patients don't survive 18 months, the doctors told Tammy.

Pediatric cancer cases like Nick's are becoming more common in Nebraska, especially childhood brain tumors, according to a study led by UNMC and the state health department that found an increase in both between 1990 and 2013.

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Areas of the state that have higher pediatric cancer rates and birth defect rates also have higher nitrate levels, researchers say.

"Over some time, we identified that there is something in Nebraska that's a little bit different," said Dr. Don Coulter, who participated in the statewide cancer study. "It's the Ogallala Aquifer."

Nebraskans' water is often clear, cool and drawn directly from the aquifer. The 174,000-square-mile High Plains aquifer is the largest source of groundwater in the United States, a lifeline for cattle, corn and families.

But when there's nitrate in their drinking water, Nebraskans can't taste or smell it.

Nitrate exists naturally. It's in vegetables. It's converted from manure produced by cattle. But it can also come from manmade sources like commercial fertilizers applied to your lawn, your neighborhood golf course, and especially to corn.

Crops need nitrogen to grow. But the nitrogen fertilizers applied to cornfields can't all be absorbed by the plants. In Nebraska, roughly a third of nitrogen applied to corn is lost to leaching, according to the Nebraska Water Center. Some of that goes into our water supply.

Our bodies easily absorb nitrate in water and convert it into nitrite, which then could morph into organic compounds called nitrosamines.

Nitrosamines can cause cancer.

A UNMC research team headed by Rogan is now looking county by county, examining links between high nitrate and the rates of the three most common pediatric cancers.

Nebraska counties with slightly elevated nitrate levels showed a seven-fold increase in the leukemia rate when compared to counties with minimal nitrate levels, the research suggests. These counties had lymphoma rates four times higher than counties with low levels. These findings are preliminary, scientists caution, and need further investigation.

But the cancer most consistently linked to elevated nitrate levels: Childhood brain cancers like Nick's. These central nervous system cancers are eight times as high as in counties with low nitrate.

Nick's family didn't know of these risks. Most Nebraskans don't, either.

The state's well water is rarely tested. Excluding public water systems, less than 4% of the roughly 180,000 registered wells are tested each year. And private wells, found in rural areas and not connected to a community's water supply, aren't required by state or federal law to be tested at all.

The Herringer family actually got their water tested once, when Hastings Utilities decided to test some wells outside its city limits. The city then mailed out the testing results. The Herringers missed the letter.

The Herringers didn't know that nitrate levels in Hastings were high. They didn't know their own nitrate levels were much higher.

Tammy said they had recently heard things about a potential cancer belt along the corn belt. They heard about poor water quality. But they never put the two together.

"You don't think that this is going to happen to you," she said. "I'm not saying that that's what caused Nicholas's diagnosis...How will we ever know?"

State leaders have been concerned about the nitrate seeping into our water for half a century.

The state's environmental agencies started testing nitrate in the 1970s. In 1986, then-Sen. Loran Schmit, a Republican from the village of Bellwood, near Columbus, spearheaded a bill to address increasing nitrate. The resulting law called on state agencies and local natural resources districts to come up with a management plan for areas with high nitrate concentrations.

But experts told the *Flatwater Free Press* that the state has not done enough to turn the tide. In the decades since Schmit first focused on nitrate, the state has continued to approve bigger feedlots. Nebraska farmers have grown more and more corn.

"The bill was to prevent groundwater contamination, and I do not know we have made progress in that direction," Schmit, a lifelong farmer who is now 94, told the *Flatwater Free Press* in an interview in September.

A few years after Schmit's bill, the EPA took its first major action to limit nitrate in drinking water.

It did so because it had become clear, both to scientists and then to the public after blaring news headlines, that high nitrate in water causes something called methemoglobinemia.

Its common name: "Blue baby syndrome."

Blue baby syndrome causes developmental delay. It causes babies' hearts to fail. And, at the time, it was killing an unknown number of young American children.

To respond, the federal government, in 1992, enacted its first-ever rule for how much nitrate would be allowed in drinking water. Ten parts per million, the rule said, reflecting studies that appeared to show that blue baby syndrome didn't happen if nitrate levels dropped below that limit.

That limit hasn't budged since. But decades of further study suggests that nitrate, even at levels below the EPA standard, is linked to potential health risks, including pediatric cancers, and birth defects. Scientists are studying what these links mean.

They could mean that nitrate by itself causes cancer, or that it mobilizes other chemicals that lead to cancer. They could mean that nitrate becomes especially dangerous when mixed with other agrichemicals like atrazine or naturally occurring elements like uranium.

The mounting evidence that nitrate may be harmful is why Rogan believes water should contain less than 3 parts per million of nitrate before children drink it.

Some 48% of private wells were over Rogan's suggested limit the last time they got tested, according to publicly available state water data.

"I think there's just mounting evidence that the EPA standard for nitrate is too high," she said. "I hope out of what we're publishing and other people are publishing, that the acceptable standard is going to get lowered."

Long before the first potential links between nitrate and cancer began to surface, Ila Foster let her two children drink from wells in Dundey County in southwest Nebraska.

After all, that's what Foster grew up drinking. And what people nearby drank, no questions asked.

"I should have gotten my water checked down there," she said. She never did.

Both Foster's parents had colon cancer.

Then her 16-year-old daughter Nancy Mossburgh, who loved to garden, was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, an extremely rare form of aggressive cancer in her muscles.

Nancy died a year later in 1996.

Foster still owns the house where Nancy grew up. When she travels there, she brings bottled water.

"There's no way I'm drinking that water out there," she said.

Before any of their loved ones got cancer, her husband Loren Mossburgh, a farmer who raised cattle, wheat and milo, worried about agrichemicals. But her husband, who has since died, was unable to sway his fellow farmers.

"My husband, when he farmed out there, he got so upset with some of those people and he said 'You know where those chemicals go to?' He said our kids are gonna be paying for it."

Water quality does play a pivotal role in community health, said Paul Black, former chair of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Poor water quality contributes to the failure of communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. The same goes for towns in the United States, he said.

"Nitrate is the key problem in Nebraska," Black explained. "The kids are sicker so they don't learn as well in school. So your community's not as healthy because your kids now are having problems."

Imagine looking at a map and zooming out so you can see the whole country, Black said. The chemical follows creeks and rivers all the way into the mighty Mississippi River and past New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico.

Nebraska stands out on this map, Black said. It's in red, a "hot zone."

"I would say Nebraska is the epicenter in the upper Midwest."

This spring, Tylr Naprstek, assistant manager of the Lower Loup Natural Resources District, waited his turn to speak to the NRD board in another district.

The meeting went long. Many of the white-haired farmers sitting in the audience left for home.

Finally it was Naprstek's turn. He rose, stood at a lectern and described the reaction when an area north of Columbus was designated a management area in 2019 – after nitrate readings skyrocketed to as high as 48 parts per million.

"Everyone was pointing fingers," he told the members of the Lower Elkhorn NRD board and the few remaining attendees. "This half of the room says, 'Well it's the manure guys over there that are doing it all,' and ...[feedlot owners were] saying 'It's the commercial fertilizer guys.'"

It's the classic blame game, described to the Flatwater Free Press by multiple local officials, NRD board members and water quality experts.

Dan Snow, a lab director at the Nebraska Water Center, has a tool that can pinpoint who's to blame.

It's a process called "fingerprinting," that allows Snow's lab to measure the amount of nitrate and identify whether it's coming from organic sources like manure, or commercial fertilizer.

Which means that, in the case of the 48-parts-per-million test near Columbus, Snow can tell you that the answer is, essentially, "all of the above."

Manure from feedlots played a significant role. So did commercial fertilizer.

But that's not the case across Nebraska.

Testing done by Snow's lab consistently shows that the majority of nitrate comes from commercial fertilizers – what we spray on our lawns, golf courses, but most of all on corn.

"I'm guessing more than 90% [comes] from commercial fertilizer," Snow told the Flatwater Free Press.

Some conditions make it more likely: shallow water tables, sandy soil texture and heavy irrigation, Snow explained.

Nebraska Farm Bureau President Mark McHargue knows that his hometown Central City fits this profile. The Platte River Valley, where his family is from, was the first in the state to observe the presence of high nitrate in their water a half-century ago.

"As farmers, we live in those communities. I have eight grandchildren. I want them to have good drinking water," he said.

And the Nebraska Farm Bureau president points out that he and others have changed some farming practices to try to make that possible.

In the past few decades, his family farm has tested the nitrate in their soil. He factors in what's already in the soil when calculating how much the crop needs.

His family also applies hog manure as a source of fertilizer in small amounts, a method known as "split application," which reduces the amount of nitrate that seeps into the water. "Quite frankly, it's a hassle. But we know in our sandy soils we can't hold as much nitrogen," he said.

Ray Ward runs a leading soil and water testing lab in Nebraska, and has been doing so for a long time – he founded the lab in Kearney 40 years ago.

When he started, some farmers used up to 350 pounds of nitrogen per acre to produce between 120 and 150 bushels of corn. That's more than double UNL's current recommended nitrogen-corn ratio.

"Farmers were pumping too much water and leaching the nitrate out," Ward said. "And the corn had turned yellow, so they just put more nitrogen on the next year."

Though the problem started decades ago, recent tests show an increase of nitrate in soils of large swaths of the state.

Snow hopes his "fingerprinting" findings will help Nebraska move beyond years of finger-pointing between farmers and feedlot owners to the next stage: finding solutions.

Snow's study in the Hastings area – the area where the Herringers live – reveals that nitrate stored beneath irrigated cropland in that NRD increased by 30% between 2011 and 2016.

And Hastings manifests a bigger problem across Nebraska.

Statewide, contaminated areas with nitrate above the EPA standard have continued to expand since the 1970s, particularly in the eastern part of the state, according to two recent studies.

Public water systems in these areas, big and small, are hemorrhaging money to treat high nitrate.

Creighton, pop. 1,147 in Knox County, spent \$1.3 million on building the state's first reverse osmosis treatment system to filter out nitrate in 1993.

Seward, a city about half an hour west of Lincoln, spent \$5 million.

Hastings spent \$15 million on theirs.

To Norfolk Mayor Josh Moenning, Creighton's response to rising nitrate levels felt like a "canary in the coal mine" moment.

"If we don't get to some kind of solution here and get a handle on this problem, it's only going to cost us more and more and into the future," he said. "And it's going to cost us in terms of negative health impacts."

"We all have a role to play – rural community leaders and elected officials, too."

A few months before Nick Herringer's diagnosis, the Adams Central Patriots, the high school down the road from the Herringers' home, played an away game against the Aurora Huskies. It was Childhood Cancer Awareness Night. Gary Peters, an Aurora father who lost his son Jacob to lymphoma in 2011, walked onto the field to read out one name after another.

"Stand up if you knew Alyssa Sandmeier."

"Stand up if you knew Tyler Larson."

"Stand up if you knew Jacob Peters."

"Stand up if you knew Sydnee Owens."

By the end, almost everyone in the stadium was standing.

All were children. All, including Peters' son Jacob, died of childhood cancer. To him, the seven pediatric cancer cases in Aurora from 2005 to 2013 seemed like a "waterfall" of different cancer diagnoses out of nowhere.

UNMC researchers have also found an association between pediatric cancer and atrazine, an herbicide many farmers say they have already phased out. *(Editor's note: A previous version of this story*

incorrectly suggested that atrazine has already been completely phased out.) Rogan's team is further expanding the studies to uranium and arsenic.

After seeing the UNMC research, Peters wondered if Jacob's lymphoma and death were related to the water they consumed. They were on a private well. They used the water for cooking and showering.

A 2013 study identified a three-fold chance of non-Hodgkin lymphoma in areas where there was both high nitrate and atrazine. Noting "awfully suspicious" overlap between high atrazine and high pediatric cancer areas, Peters said he suspects a mix of different agrichemicals leads to pediatric cancers like his son's.

He said lawmakers need to make people aware of this "silent battle."

"How long is it gonna [take to] change, to get legislation that outlaws these chemicals that could give our kids cancer? There's no definite time," Peters said. "There's just too many dollars involved. And the people making those decisions are only concerned about the bottom line. They're not really concerned about kids getting cancer."

He's frustrated at the status quo. Policymakers have known about nitrate for more than 40 years. Little has changed.

Natural resources districts in the state, created 50 years ago for local management of water resources in each watershed, have been taking painstaking steps toward battling nitrate.

"It takes tough decisions," said Mike Sousek, manager of the Lower Elkhorn NRD in the northeastern part of the state. He and his team have been encouraging farmers to adopt practices that benefit the environment, such as growing cover crops. Farmers can receive government funding for doing so.

"I got millions of dollars. I can't even spend it. I can't get people to sign up just to try to change [their practices]," he said. "Money isn't enough of a carrot."

The stick isn't there either.

Then-Sen. Schmit designed a mechanism to protect groundwater safety – the state environmental protection authority and local NRDs should work together.

Neither the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy nor NRDs have issued a cease and desist order to or fined a single person for using too much nitrogen fertilizer or applying excessive manure in the state, NRD leaders said.

Regulators don't even know how much nutrient gets applied to the ground, and how much remains in the soil.

Nick has fought vomiting and seizures with a sense of calmness.

"I prayed a lot," he said.

Tammy said her son's personality changed since his second surgery. She doesn't hear his nonstop whistling anymore. He has become quieter. He's more succinct.

Nick has tried taking college classes online, but he tires easily.

After almost a year of stable health while on oral chemotherapy, Nick recently learned his tumor has again grown. His family is exploring his next treatment plan.

He knows one thing. He won't have another surgery.

"Nick always says 'I'm in a win-win situation. If I beat this cancer, then I beat a cancer that's very aggressive. And if I don't, then I will be in heaven with Jesus, and that is a win-win,'" Tammy said.

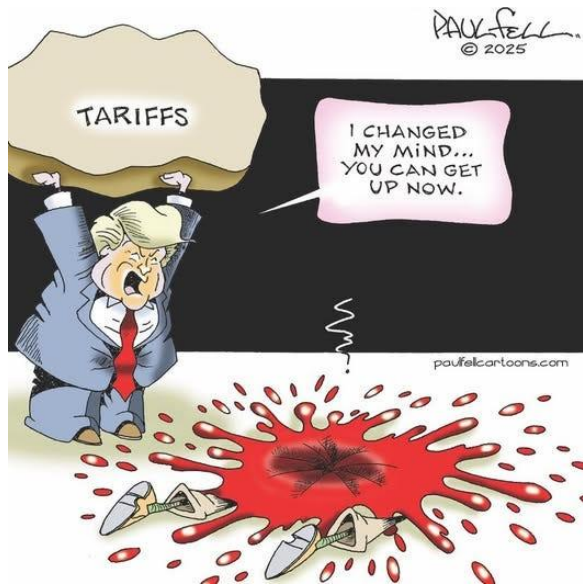
Nick, sitting nearby, nods his head. "That gives me goosebumps," he said.

For now, Nick continues the fight that Nancy, Jacob, and many other Nebraskan children have already lost.

"Experts are telling us this is affecting our children. There are real life and death situations being played out here," Sousek said. "We have to start paying attention. It's our kids."

Trump's War On Nebraska

By Dennis Crawford



Trump's Nebraska voters are being harmed by his policies. They were warned.

Donald Trump has always been very popular in Nebraska outside of the urban areas in Omaha and Lincoln. (Approximately half of the state's 2 million people reside in Nebraska's urban areas. Harris carried Douglas and Lancaster counties by 5 to 6 points.) The last three presidential election statewide results were as follows:

2016: Trump 59% Clinton 34%

2020: Trump 58% Biden 39%

2024: Trump 59% Harris 39%

Trump has "rewarded" that support by punishing Nebraska during the early phases of his second term. The people that voted for Trump should have known better. The 34-time convicted felon repeatedly told us that he was going to impose tariffs or import taxes, and start a trade war. In addition, most of the people who drafted Project 2025 served in the first Trump administration and supported his 2024 presidential candidacy. We warned them but they did not listen.

Already, the economic chaos and slowdown caused by Trump's tariffs has driven the state of Nebraska into bankruptcy and a possible recession. It was recently reported by the state's economic forecasting board that Nebraska's projected budget deficit for the next two years has grown by \$190 million. That is in addition to the already projected \$289 million deficit.

In a remarkable development, Republican state senators are blaming Trump for the chaos and the budget deficit. Former Senator John Kuehn of Heartwell, a member of the forecast board, was among

the nine forecasters who said federal uncertainty is impacting their local communities. "Chaos is the word of the day," Kuehn said.

He said that it is difficult for businesses and consumers to make long term plans. "Just keep your head on a swivel and see what the day's news cycle is going to bring, and don't open your accounts," Kuehn said. "And if you do, be sitting down."

Other forecasters noted the off and on nature of the import taxes from Trump. Senator Rob Clements said it could take a little while to settle down from that feeling of "chaos."

Senator Brad von Gillern, chair of the Revenue Committee, said the pessimistic prognostication reflected global uncertainty, which caused the forecast of more red ink. Things are so bad that the state forecasting board has projected \$300 million less in tax revenues over the next two years.

Incidentally, the cost of Trump's tariffs that were announced on so-called "Liberation Day on April 2 will cost the average American household about \$2,100. If Trump implements all of his import taxes, that figure increases to \$3,800. This a real betrayal of the American people since Trump promised "rapid and fast price cuts beginning on day one."

Trump's tariffs are also damaging (again) the backbone of Nebraska's economy: agriculture. Trump's failed trade war during his first term cost Nebraska farmers \$2 billion. By 2020, 40% of farm income came from a federal bailout. The cost of the 2020 farm bailout exceeded the cost of maintaining our nuclear arsenal. Now Trump is doing it again.

Nebraska farmers are especially vulnerable to a trade war since more than 90% of Nebraska's corn exports go to Canada, Mexico and China, the countries being hit the hardest by these tariffs. In addition, China has historically been a big purchaser of Nebraska soybeans.

Paul Krueger, a corn and soybean farmer from Bladen said it best: "Any time our country gets involved with any sort of tariffs that affect the agriculture industry, every farmer just kind of groans about that. We're powerless to do anything except take what comes out in the wash."

Nebraska Farm Bureau President Mark McHargue said that Nebraska farmers would rather have markets than federal subsidies. McHargue said Nebraska farmers are about to begin the growing season with the expectation of ending in the red. "As we get ready to plant our crops here in the next couple of weeks, we are literally putting seeds in the ground that we're probably going to lose money on every acre," he said.

Nebraska has also been the victim of Elon's Musk corrupt and incompetent DOGE scheme. Nearly

\$100 million in funding already promised to Nebraska has been canceled. As the Flatwater Free Press reported: "It will mean less federal money for university research, childhood vaccinations and mental health and substance abuse treatment. It means fewer dollars for battling opioid addiction, addressing health disparities in underserved areas and responding to infectious diseases.

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, multiple studies on alcohol's connection with intimate partner violence were wounded by grant cancellations. UNMC lost awards to be used for strengthening infectious disease prevention. Nearly \$19 million vanished that had been set aside to combat substance abuse and grapple with various mental health issues. More than \$15 million for childhood immunization grants to the state got chopped as well."

The good people of Nebraska will take another big hit if the Republicans in Congress pass the \$880 billion in Medicaid cuts contained in their budget outline. At the present time, Congressional committees are in the process of writing the legislation that will specify the budget cuts.

Medicaid insures thousands of Nebraskans and protects our vital rural hospitals. At least twelve Nebraska hospitals will shut their doors if the Republicans in Congress pass these draconian cuts to Medicaid.

Nebraska health care providers are justifiably alarmed. Amy Behnke, CEO of the Health Center Association of Nebraska, said Medicaid expansion cuts alone could strip health coverage from 10,000 patients and cost Nebraska's community health centers \$33 million in lost revenue, leading to service reductions or facility closures.

"Hundreds of billions of dollars in Medicaid cuts will terminate health insurance for millions of Americans and shutter hospitals, doctors' offices and nursing homes," Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), the ranking members of the Senate Finance and Budget Committees, respectively, wrote in a recent editorial.

Despite this looming catastrophe, Nebraska's entire Congressional delegation has voted in favor of the GOP budget outline. Thus far, these five members of Congress have voted in lockstep with Trump and their party bosses, to the detriment of the people who elected them. Representative Don Bacon (R-NE) likes to occasionally criticize Trump, but he continues to vote with him. He cannot be trusted to stand up to the former TV reality show star.

People wonder why so many Republicans vote against their self-interest. I would attribute it to the fact that Nebraska Republicans run as phony moderates and use a huge advantage in campaign cash

to push out that disingenuous message. Once they get to Washington, they vote with Trump and his billionaire buddies.

Another factor is that many Republicans base their vote on their religious beliefs. They vote for Republicans who want to ban abortion and take away rights from the LGBTQ community. Many churches in Nebraska are an arm of the RNC and lean in heavily on politicized religious and cultural issues.

Perhaps the most important factor of all is that the conservative media or the GOP state media is the mainstream media in the areas outside of Lincoln and Omaha. Right wing talk radio is omnipresent on your car's radio dial and when you go into a business in a red area, the televisions are usually tuned into Fox.

The answer to this problem is that Democrats need to campaign in rural areas. I'm convinced that we can peel off some soft Republican support if we show up and tell people what we stand for. The Democratic Party announced last week that they are bringing back the 50-state strategy that led to blue waves in 2006 and 2008. We cannot afford to voluntarily concede large parts of the country to the GOP. Democrat need to fight them everywhere. No layoffs.

We have a big opportunity in the 2026 elections. Trump and the Republican Party are sinking like a stone in the polls since they are wrecking the country. I expect numerous good candidates to run for office across Nebraska since there will be a huge backlash to the MAGA agenda. History shows that the party holding the White House gets blown out in the mid-term elections.

Let us forever be remembered as the generation that saved America from fascism.

Be confident going forward. Take nothing for granted. Keep working hard. If we do the work, we will win!

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