

# The Lancaster County Democrat

**LANCASTER COUNTY  
DEMOCRATS**

March 2026

## 2026 Patriots' Dinner

On **Saturday, March 28, 2026**, we gather for something bigger than a dinner. We gather to build momentum for 2026.

The 42nd Patriots Dinner is our annual celebration of the volunteers, leaders, and neighbors who power Democratic victories across Lancaster County, and it's the launchpad for the critical midterm elections ahead.

**This is the night where energy turns into action.**

You'll hear from inspiring speakers, celebrate our outstanding volunteers and Democratic leaders, and take part in one of our most anticipated traditions, the candidate dessert auction, where campaigns bring their best (and most delicious) creations to fuel the fight ahead.

**Reserve your seat today and be part of the momentum.**

Together, we're not just preparing for the midterms. We're shaping what comes next.



### Run of Show:

5:30 PM – Mayors Reception

6:30 PM – Doors Open

7:00 PM – Patriots Dinner Program

Lincoln Station Great Hall

201 N 7th St, Lincoln, NE 68508

**Please reserve your tickets by March 16th.**

Sponsorship opportunities are available at several levels for those ready to invest even further in our work. Tickets can be purchased through the [link below](#) or by mailing a check to: LCDP, PO Box 83213, Lincoln, NE 68501

If you're unable to attend, we hope you'll consider sponsoring a ticket so someone else can join us and be part of the energy.

## 2026 County Democratic Convention

Sunday, March 29, 2026

1:00 PM

IBEW Local 265,  
1409 Old Farm Rd,  
Lincoln, NE

Pre-register here: <https://forms.gle/T41rrC6gF273TtiL7>

[Purchase Tickets](#)

## Candidates for Office - 2026 General Election – by Jim Johnson

*In contested races where incumbent Democrats are running for re-election, the County Party endorses the incumbents unless the Central Committee has voted to remain neutral. Endorsed candidates are listed below in alphabetical order.*

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### **US Senate**

Cindy Burbank

### **US House of Representatives, District 1**

Chris Backemeyer

Eric Moyer

### **Governor**

Lynne Walz

Larry Marvin

### **Secretary of State**

Lee Cimfel

Sarah Slattery

### **State Treasurer**

Daniel Ebers

### **Attorney General**

Jocelyn Brasher

### **Nebraska State Legislature**

#### *District 2*

Caitlin Knutson

Jayden Speed

#### *District 26*

George Dungan, Incumbent

#### *District 28*

Chad Kulig

Patty Pansing-Brooks

#### *District 30*

Janet Bock

#### *District 32*

Shay Smith, Nonpartisan

#### *District 46*

Danielle Conrad, Incumbent

### **State Board of Education**

#### *District 5*

Michaela Conway

### **University of Nebraska Board of Regents**

#### *District 1*

Brent Comstock, Nonpartisan

### **SCC Board of Governors**

#### *District 3*

Chris Reid

#### *District 4*

Carina McCormick, Incumbent

Logan Niedzielski

#### *District 5*

Joann Herrington Pitcher, Incumbent

### **State Board of Education**

Michaela Conway

### **Nebraska Public Power District**

Mary Harding, Incumbent

### **Lower Platte South NRD**

#### *District 1*

Karis Ahlberg

#### *District 2*

David Hibler, Incumbent

#### *District 3*

Melissa Baker, Incumbent

#### *District 4*

Ted Kessler

#### *District 5*

Suzanne Mealer, Incumbent

#### *District 6*

Alex Johnson

#### *District 7*

Luke Peterson, Incumbent

#### *District 8*

Tom Green, Incumbent

#### *District 9*

Donna Baur

#### *District 10*

Kenny Fischer

#### *At Large*

David Landis, Incumbent

### **Lancaster County Commissioner**

#### *District 1*

Sean Flowerday, Incumbent

#### *District 5*

Rick Vest, Incumbent

### **Lancaster County Clerk**

Matt Hansen, Incumbent

### **Lancaster County Clerk of the District Court**

Kristen Anderson

Simon Rezac, Incumbent

### **Lancaster County Treasurer**

Rachel Garver, Incumbent

### **Lancaster County Sheriff**

Jay Pitts

### **Lancaster County Attorney**

Randall Ritnour

### **Lancaster County Public Defender**

Kristi Egger, Incumbent

Sarah Newell

### **Lancaster County Assessor/Register of Deeds**

Doug Guess

Dan Nolte, Incumbent

### **Malcolm Board of Education**

Vanessa Roof

### **Norris Board of Education**

Steph Meese

## Eric Moyer: Rooted in Nebraska, Ready to Get to Work.



I love this state and the people in it. Nebraska is my home; it is where Heidi and I have raised our children, by choice. The people of this state made me, challenged me, and taught me something I've carried my whole life: when something matters, you don't argue about it endlessly. You roll up your sleeves and get to work.

That instinct showed up early, wrenching on my bicycle before I was old enough to

drive and restoring vintage cars by the time I was sixteen—not because it was cool, but because I am driven to understand how things work and how to make them better. When something breaks, you don't throw it away. You diagnose the problem, gather the right tools, and fix what you can. That mindset has followed me into adulthood and every job I have had.

For the past decade, I worked in renewable energy, supporting Nebraska's grid and lowering energy bills for working families. For me, domestic energy isn't a broad talking point, it is keeping the lights on, strengthening domestic security, and making sure rural and urban communities alike are not priced out of basic necessities. It is about working with Ag producers toward solutions that provide financial stability and make it easier to make a profit. Good ideas are non-partisan, and practical solutions matter more than who gets credit.

Growing up, I spent time working my grandparents' orchard. Picking tomatoes or brushing and sorting apples wasn't particularly easy or fun. Anyone who has dirt on their boots knows, you don't tend the land once and walk away. You do it season by season, knowing that the payoff is something you may never see but quietly hope future generations will. That's how I think about public service. Stewardship matters when planning for a better future.

I have also worked as a ranch hand. Anyone who's fixed a fence in the cold, dug thistles in the heat of a sweltering summer day, or watched a storm roll in when you're already exhausted knows this truth: resilience is earned. It is built through long hours, shared effort, and a willingness to finish a difficult task, toiling away when no one's looking. Farmers feed the world, it's time we protect their future, with policies that support resilient family farms and bring back markets.

I'm an optimist by nature. I always see the glass half-full, not because I ignore problems, but because I believe we can solve them together. The constant division in politics isn't just exhausting; it impedes our

collective progress, breeds apathy, and erodes trust in our institutions.

I believe apathy is the single greatest threat to our republic. The sense that neither side has the people's interests in mind or that your vote doesn't matter is corrosive to every fundamental principal which makes the United States the greatest nation in the world. Nebraska deserves representation that works across the aisle, listens first, and brings people together around solutions that make life better for all Nebraskans.

Healthcare is a perfect example. Reproductive care *is* healthcare. Healthcare *is* a human right. Medicare for All isn't about ideology, it's about dignity, stability, and making sure working families are not one illness away from financial ruin. These are Nebraska values.

This district is rural and urban, conservative and progressive, deeply rooted and future focused. I refuse to believe we must choose between any of these qualities. We can invest in domestic energy, protect family farms, strengthen our communities, support working families by reforming our tax code, and treat one another with respect, whoever you are and wherever you come from. Urban and rural alike, we can and will build a better future for all Nebraskans.

I'm running for Congress because I believe we can do anything if we choose collaboration over cynicism. When we choose each other, over special interests and flashy Washington influence. When you're ready to move past the noise and toward solutions that work in the real world, I hope you will walk this road with me—by staying engaged, talking with your neighbors, and growing this movement from the Missouri river to the far western plains.

I'm asking for your vote in the primary on May 12th. Since announcing my candidacy in August of 2025, I have shown up: Lincoln, Louisville, Norfolk, Columbus, Madison, Plattsmouth, Seward, Stanton, Utica, Bellevue, LaVista, Springfield and more. I will always show up for the people of our beautiful state. We can fix what's broken if we work together. I'm driven by what we will achieve—I look forward to representing *YOU*, in Congress.

*Platform information at [EricMoyerforCongress.com](https://ericmoyerforcongress.com).*

*Follow Eric Moyer for Congress on Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky, Twitter, and TikTok.*



## Why I Serve by Delaney Witt

### 2nd Vice Chair of the Lancaster County Democrats

If you've ever canvassed in Lancaster County you know to expect the unexpected. Whether that changes once an hour, neighborhoods that seem to have entire blocks between the homes, and blisters that stain your shoes. I've knocked doors in wind that tried to steal my literature, in heat that tested my life choices and cold that made me question every decision that led me there. And yet volunteers kept showing up, voters kept answering the door and conversations kept happening.

Somewhere between chasing my runaway clipboard and petting my 100th Democratic doggie, I realized something. This is what democracy looks like. It's messy. It's imperfect. And it only works when we show up for one another.

Shirley Chisholm once said, "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair." That's the spirit I believe the Lancaster County Democrats embody. We make space. We hold ourselves accountable. And we build a bigger table so every voice in our community is represented.

That's why I'm running for Chair: to strengthen Party rooted in diversity, grounded in accountability and focused on true progress. Over the last 11 years, I've worked to turn that belief into action. From countless hours of door knocking and phone banking to recruiting volunteers and supporting candidates, I've seen firsthand what it takes to build a stronger, more connected Democratic community.

Today, I'm proud to serve as the 2nd Vice Chair of the Lancaster County Democrats and Vice Chair of the Nebraska Stonewall Democrats. In these roles, I've focused on expanding outreach, welcoming new voices into the work we do, and strengthening the grassroots energy that drives our success.

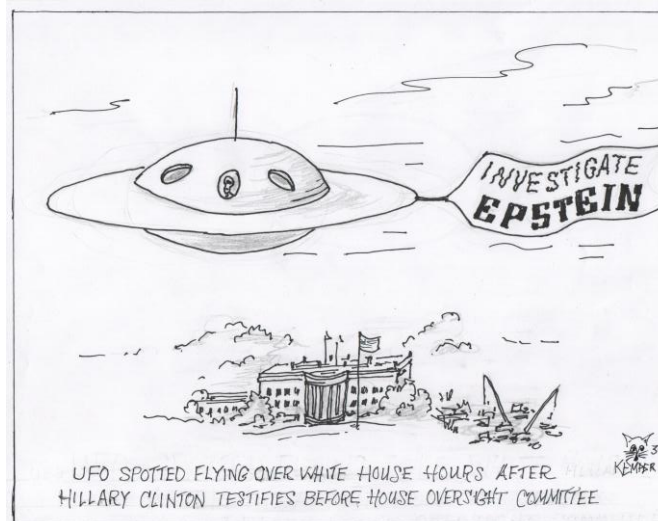
My platform is rooted in three commitments: diversity, accountability, and progress, not as buzzwords, but as promises. I believe our party should look like the community we're fighting for, which is why I will work closely with our caucuses to ensure our Central Committee and the candidates we recruit - reflect the full, vibrant diversity of Lancaster County. Representation doesn't happen by accident; it happens because we make it a priority. I also believe accountability is an act of respect. Clear and concise responsibilities for every board member, transparent expectations and timely financial audits aren't just procedural; they show our voters, our candidates and our elected officials that we take this work seriously and we utilize our finances effectively. When we lead with inclusion and operate with integrity, we build trust. And trust is what allows us to create real, tangible progress - the kind that elects Democrats up and down the ballot and strengthens our community for the long haul.

Through organizing, coalition-building and community engagement, I've learned that strong leadership isn't about titles - it's about listening, showing up, and making sure every Democrat in Lancaster County feels valued, included and empowered to make a difference.

I'm running for Chair because I care deeply about the party and the people who power it. Together, we can build ourselves stronger, more inclusive and ready for the work ahead.

I would be honored to earn your support.

### Note from our Cartoonist, Steve Kemper

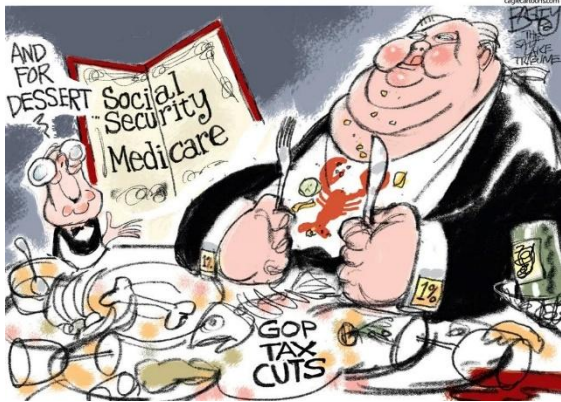


I believe it goes without further explanation about what this cartoon is about. But if you would like to include further supporting details it was the Congressman from MO (Burlison) who serves on the House Oversight Committee, that asked Clinton what she knew about UFOs. This character represents SW MO and unfortunately is our Congressional Representative. And to believe Adrian Smith used to drive me bonkers when we lived out state in NE!

Steve

# Trump Regime Planning Medicare Death Panels

By Dennis Crawford



*Conservatives have opposed Medicare since its inception.*

The GOP donor class and right wing of the Republican party have opposed Medicare since its inception during the Kennedy administration. These elites have a philosophical belief that funding health care for the sick and elderly isn't a legitimate function of the federal government. Instead, they believe that government exists to comfort the already comfortable in the false belief that it will trickle down to the rest of us.

During the debate over Medicare in 1961, the American Medical Association recruited a former, washed up actor to scare the American people into opposing Medicare or "socialized medicine." Ronald Reagan believed Medicare would lead to the destruction of "every area of freedom as we have known it in this country." In a LP recording he made in 1961, he said: "One of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children, and our children's children, what it once was like in America when men were free."

The Republicans shut down the government twice in 1995–96 with the aim of cutting Medicare to fund a tax cut for the rich. Bill Clinton stood firm and the Republicans backed down. This unpopular shutdown laid the foundation for Clinton's successful re-election campaign in 1996.

During the Obama administration, the Congressional Republicans led by Paul Ryan pushed out a scheme to replace Medicare with a voucher program. Instead of getting the guarantee of insurance coverage, senior citizens would have received a voucher or coupon with which to purchase private health insurance. If passed, this plan would have cost the average senior citizen thousands of dollars in additional costs every year. The plan went nowhere.

During his president campaigns, Donald Trump and the Republicans promised not to touch Medicare. Trump promised "great health care at a tiny fraction of the cost" and said it would be "so easy." The regime broke that promise (no surprise) and is setting up a Medicare

pilot program in six states that would ration care and establish AI Death Panels.

"The federal government plans to hire private companies to use artificial intelligence to determine whether patients would be covered for some procedures, like certain spine surgeries or steroid injections. Similar algorithms used by insurers have been the subject of several high-profile lawsuits, which have asserted that the technology allowed the companies to swiftly deny large batches of claims and cut patients off from care in rehabilitation facilities.

The A.I. companies selected to oversee the program would have a strong financial incentive to deny claims. Medicare plans to pay them a share of the savings generated from rejections.

But while experts agree that wasteful spending exists, they worry that the pilot program may pave the way for traditional Medicare to adopt some of the most unpopular practices of private insurers.

People enrolled in traditional Medicare who live in Arizona, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Washington State will be included in the experiment, which is expected to start in January and last for six years."

From the *NY Times* on August 28, 2025.

"Medicare is one of the most successful and popular government programs in U.S. history. One reason for its popularity is that it's far more user-friendly than private insurance. Medicare covers more procedures and tests. With private insurance, you often need prior authorization for even basic medical procedures — an unwieldy process that takes too long and can result in inexplicable denials, even when a doctor recommends treatment.

What makes this initiative even more dystopian is that the AI companies will get a cut of the savings they generate. That creates a powerful incentive to deny more treatments. The worse it is for patients, the more money these companies make. It's a cut to Medicare services designed to enrich tech barons. And while we don't trust a word Trump says, this blatantly breaks his oft-repeated promise to protect Medicare.

Democrats should call this provision "AI Death Panels for Medicare."

(The above is from Dan Pfeiffer. I'm a paid subscriber to his periodic emails. Unfortunately, I can't provide a link.) Please call your members of Congress about the death panels for Medicare. Flood the phone lines! Thank you!

## Sources consulted:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/28/health/medicare-prior-approval-health-care.html>

<https://www.thetelegraph.com/news/article/Reagan-was-wrong-about-Medicare-17170700.php>

## **Helen Boosalis: Governor's race grabs national attention**

**By Jim Schaffer**

Part 2

Helen Boosalis, Lincoln's newly elected mayor in 1975, faced plenty of day-to-day struggles with a Republican majority on the city council. Yet a woman in the mayor's office heightened citizen interest, and Helen used her visibility to advance the involvement of more women in politics. Shortly after her election, for example, she established a Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women.

Helen was also in great demand to speak to groups of all kinds, and she used neighborhood forums to solicit names of people willing to serve as volunteers on boards and commissions. She then used her "resource bank" to make numerous mayoral appointments.

### **Downtown projects**

To strengthen the downtown core, Helen's administration completed a beautification project along O Street—street and sidewalk improvements—bricks, benches, and other amenities. The city-financed parking garage (the Centrum) went forward as planned to provide over a thousand precious downtown parking spaces.

Meanwhile, the growing power of neighborhoods, with strong encouragement from the mayor, mirrored a movement gaining traction nationally. In Lincoln, neighborhood organizations that had formed in the early 1970s to battle threats such as zoning changes, were now helping to shape city decisions affecting their areas, such as parks, swimming pools, and district elections. One of the brightest achievements of Helen's time in office was Lincoln being designated as an All-America City in 1978. Lincoln was just one of ten cities to win the distinguished award from the National Municipal League. Helen's most controversial appointment, that of police chief George Hansen, eventually worked out well. He performed an exemplary job and won over even his harshest critics by overhauling the police department, changing from a traditional military model to a "team policing" model—a plan in sync with the mayor's philosophy.

### **Seeking volunteers**

Hoping to spark a citywide campaign to get volunteer help for parks, the mayor issued a holiday wish list in a forty-page "Catalog of Gifts." The catalog was also a way to educate the public about the cost of their government. Any citizen, company, or organization could buy gifts in a broad price range that included fluorescent lights (\$150), jaws of life (\$6,700), fire truck (\$75,000), jogging path (\$800), four lighted ball fields (\$460,000), eight SWAT team caps (\$25), a device to help police search for buried bodies (\$8,995), license tags for cats and dogs (\$.05 per

tag), in other words, something for everyone. In its first year, the catalog produced \$231,383 in cash and gifts.

Nancy McClelland, who chaired the Mayor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, credits Helen's work to install handicapped parking and curb cuts long before other communities had them. "Today whenever I have a really tough task that intimidates me," McClelland writes, "I say to myself, 'Act like Helen Boosalis.' Get the ball rolling, get it done, then get on to the next task. You can do it."

During her visits to local businesses to learn how city government could better support them, Helen had developed a friendly relationship with the management of the Kawasaki plant, which manufactured motorcycles, recreational watercraft, utility vehicles, and snowmobiles. When Kawasaki experienced a slowdown in 1981, it took the remarkable step of lending some of its employees to Lincoln's municipal government as temporary workers. Employees continued to be paid by Kawasaki while they worked for the city, and they returned to the plant assembly line when sales rebounded.

### **A second mayoral campaign**

The headwinds against Helen's second term had to do with the familiar "anti-business" tag that her opponents had used against her over and over. "Helen received a bum rap," said Rich Bailey, her communications consultant. "Her genuine interest in people and their concerns scared some people of the establishment—if she was willing to pay attention to everybody and anybody, that meant there were no longer just a few who could get access. So that translated into their view of her being anti-business."

Helen had to compromise her usual door-to-door, person-to-person style for her second mayoral campaign. "During the campaign, Mrs. Boosalis campaigned 18 hours a day," a reporter observed, "but ironically, she says the job she's trying to keep is preventing her from campaigning the way she knows and likes best—door-to-door."

This was the first city council election to use a partial district system, which had been strongly opposed by the sitting council. District elections were hailed by the *Lincoln Star* as the "biggest change on the local political scene since implementation of the strong mayor form of government in the early 1960s." The district system proved to encourage more neighborhood activist candidates than the more costly, at-large elections.

### **A primary challenge**

The headlines on May 2 told the story: "Mayor Jubilant Over Reelection" and "Win Amazes Mayor." Helen's come-from-behind win was decisive: Boosalis, 54 percent; opponent Stan Matzke, 46 percent. And that wasn't all. Suddenly the veto-proof 5-2 majority of the prior council had switched to an opposite 2-5 split.

The newly elected members of the council were expected to support the policies Boosalis had set out in her first term. The new district election plan had indeed become the great equalizer, diminishing the advantage of incumbency and name recognition.

### **National office?**

At the time, Helen's unique position as the only woman mayor of a large city made her a logical candidate for a leadership role in the U.S. Conference of Mayors. She might have been the new kid on the block, but she quickly became a major spokesperson for U.S. mayors. She and several other big city mayors, for example, were sent to the White House to discuss federal revenue sharing plans set to expire in 1976.

At the time federal funds made up about 10 percent of Lincoln's budget, in particular for street construction, buses, law enforcement, health care, and development in older neighborhoods. Like most mayors, Boosalis was a strong proponent of continued federal revenue as long as the dollars did not mean federal control of local government.

### **Conference of Mayors**

Helen's appointment in 1977 as chair of the Resolutions Committee of the U.S. Conference of Mayors paved the way for her to eventually become president of the national organization. The U.S. Conference of Mayors was founded to help mayors manage economic problems in their cities and seek assistance from the federal government. To be chosen as president of this organization was a big deal. Moreover, the mayor of Lincoln (eightieth-largest U.S. city in the 1980 census) became the national organization's first woman president.

"For the first time in its 47-year history, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has placed a woman in line to become its president and leading advocate," reported the *Pittsburgh Press*. "That would give the 59-year-old Democrat regular access to the President of the United States, as well as an opportunity to wield considerable influence in the mayors' organization."

Barbara Goldman, a lobbyist for Lincoln, said she had watched "Helen go from being one of the most well-liked mayors, to being one of the most respected. And that's not an easy task with these people as your peers."

### **President-elect**

During Helen's year as president-elect (1980-81), the mayors lost a sympathetic ear in the White House when Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter. Not long into the new administration, Helen was summoned to the White House along with four other mayors and five governors to respond to Reagan's block grants proposal—he wanted to consolidate ninety federal grant programs into

seven. The idea would move that funding from cities to state governments.

The mayors came ready to challenge this "new federalism." Helen's challenge was to unite the angry voices of mayors who felt abandoned by their federal government at a time of economic crisis.

The discouraging picture for cities only grew worse. A second round of Reagan budget cuts in September 1981 brought an additional 12 percent cut. This threw a grenade into most cities' planning and budgeting efforts, leaving them little choice but to slash programs and services.

Boosalis spoke powerfully for cities of all sizes in saying, "With all due respect, Mr. President, you're you're wrong. We do need the federal government to help us with these problems. Mayors are wrestling with federal cuts at the same time they are wrestling with the effects of a recession, tight money and rising unemployment." Reagan's response was predictably callous: "There must be some pain" until the economy revives and inflation eases, he said.

### **No third term**

When Helen decided not to run for a third term in 1983, she learned that her daughter Beth had decided to run for office herself, launching a ten-year career as alderman in Evanston. Shortly before her last day as mayor, Tom White, editor of the *Lincoln Star*, wrote of Helen's lasting contributions to Lincoln—her "vision to push Lincoln from just a neat and clean Midwestern city to one of vitality, energy and greater equality." And to do that, "she opened up government, promoted more responsible involvement and shared the power." Or, as humorist Andy Rooney put it, "Mayors have to get right in there and wrestle with the bears."

### **A new job**

As things turned out, Helen had no time for second thoughts as just two weeks after leaving the mayor's office, she began a new job as director of the Nebraska Department on Aging. Boosalis viewed her role as an advocate for older Nebraskans. She spoke to groups across the state about issues such as in-home services, rising health care costs, housing options, and transportation. In just two years she visited more than 150 senior groups, because "bringing people into the process is my method of governance," she said. "People should be part of the decisions that affect their lives."

While still director of the Nebraska Department on Aging, Boosalis was appointed in 1985 to AARP's National Legislative Council, where she served for the next six years. She believed that AARP should use its tremendous power (a membership of over 33 million) to influence policy decisions. Her experience in the public eye got the attention of AARP leaders. "Because Helen was such a good speaker, we tried to use her as much as we could at

public events,” Director of Policy and Strategy John Rother said.

Boosalis continued to stay busy during her so-called “retirement” years. She spearheaded Lincoln’s Preservation Commission and served on the board of trustees of the Arbor Day Foundation. She was also appointed to the Community Health Endowment Board of Trustees, an organization established from the proceeds of the sale of Lincoln General Hospital by the city to Bryan Memorial Hospital in 1997.

### **Running for governor**

In late October 1985, a year before the end of his first term, Governor Kerrey made a surprise announcement, saying he would not run again, throwing state Democrats into disarray. At the time Helen had served two and a half years as Kerrey’s director of the Department of Aging, but now she faced the decision whether to run to succeed him as governor. Before long, she was ready to make her case: “Governor Kerrey will be a tough act to follow. But I will, won’t I!”

### **Something new in national politics**

With a gubernatorial election on the horizon, Nebraska had a big surprise for the nation—the leading contender in each party was a woman: Republican Kay Orr and Democrat Helen Boosalis. National interest in the election was keen. It was the first time in U.S. history that two women would go head-to-head in a campaign for the governorship.

### **The competitors**

Although Orr and Boosalis had a combined fifty years of political experience, they were barely acquainted. On the heels of Geraldine Ferraro’s selection as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, however, many were already calling 1986 “The Year of the Woman.” Times were indeed changing. By that point seven women (all Democrats) had been elected governor. The first three had succeeded their husbands in office. But the idea that Nebraska, of all places, would take the lead in gender politics had many scratching their heads. *U.S. News and World Report* asked: “Why such a first in a state reputedly so conservative?” And the *Philadelphia Inquirer* chimed in, “Nebraska has taken the female office holder a bit more seriously than most other states.” Yet many Nebraskans simply saw the two candidates as very capable people who just happened to be women. “If Nebraska is anything in demographics, it’s Western,” said state senator John Cavanaugh. “It focuses on the worth and integrity of individuals.”

“There is a long tradition of prominent women in Nebraska, such as Willa Cather and Louise Pound,” explained Robert Knoll, UNL emeritus professor. “Pioneer women worked every bit as hard as men. It was the spirit of the frontier. Helen was the modern version of these earlier pioneering women.”

### **Raising campaign funds**

The Republican Party badly wanted to elect the country’s first woman Republican governor. That’s why President Reagan and Vice-President Bush both made visits to Nebraska, pouring over \$300,000 into her campaign coffers.

To compete with Republican fund-raising, Boosalis had to spend valuable time away from the campaign trail to travel out of state to raise funds. “Money is always a problem for Democrats in this state,” said Boosalis co-campaign manager Marg Badura. Fortunately, Boosalis received the enthusiastic support of the national Greek American network. Presidential candidate Michael Dukakis, for example, wrote a successful fund-raising letter and paved the way for several Greek American fund-raising events outside Nebraska.

### **On the campaign trail**

Helen’s campaign was a high-energy affair. As Chris Beutler, one of her Democratic primary opponents, said after losing to Helen, “When I got out of the primary, I felt like I had been scorched by a comet.”

The focus of Helen’s campaign plan was “to hold onto Democrats, get a reasonable share of independents, and not get completely shut out by Republicans.” The challenge was clear: 51 percent of Nebraska’s registered voters were Republicans compared to 42 percent registered Democrats. Yet, despite the registration numbers, the Nebraska governorship had rotated frequently between the two major parties: since 1900 there had been fifteen Republican governors and ten Democratic governors.

### **Election Day, Nov. 4, 1986**

The result of the election was close, but Orr prevailed, having narrowly won in Douglas County. Boosalis ran very strong in Lancaster County and polled 47% statewide. On the night of her last election, Helen was “smiling and dry-eyed” as she thanked her supporters and said they were a class act throughout her campaign. But surely on this seventh and last of her election nights, Boosalis was truly the class act.



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Jim Johnson [jimjohnson\\_1958@yahoo.com](mailto:jimjohnson_1958@yahoo.com).

## Support the Lancaster County Democrats today!

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I prefer to get my newsletter (please check one): \_\_\_\_\_ via e-mail or \_\_\_\_\_ via US mail.

**Please also consider a donation to the Lancaster County Democratic Party.  
Your donation helps support party activities including Get Out The Vote efforts,  
candidate support services, political forums and the Lancaster County Democrat.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sustaining Donor (Monthly Donation - credit card authorization)**  
I hereby authorize the Lancaster County Democratic Party to charge the credit card below \$\_\_\_\_\_ each month.  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **One-time Donation (credit card authorization)**  
I hereby authorize the Lancaster County Democratic Party to charge the credit card below for a one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Electronic Donation via ActBlue**  
I am sending a separate electronic donation via the County Party's ActBlue account:  
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Make check or money order payable to Lancaster County Democratic Party or charge to:  
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Please return this form to the Lancaster County Democratic Party, PO Box 83213, Lincoln NE 68501-3213.