

LANCASTER COUNTY
DEMOCRATS

The Lancaster County Democrat

February 2024

CHRISTA
YOAKUM
COUNTY COMMISSIONER



Throughout her 20 years of public service focusing on healthcare reform, education, immigrant integration, and women's health and wellness initiatives, Christa Yoakum has built a solid reputation as a thoughtful, effective leader. She has served as Lancaster County Commissioner for District 2 since 2019 and is running for reelection.

Yoakum has lowered the tax levy while investing in our county's infrastructure. She supports law enforcement and first responders, pushes for increased mental and behavioral health funding, and is actively involved with efforts to reduce racial disparities in the juvenile justice system.

"I'm proud of our work lowering the property tax rate, supporting public safety, and prioritizing mental health care the past four years. I'm running for reelection to keep working for Lancaster County families. We've invested in repairing roads and bridges across the county and worked with the Legislature and

city of Lincoln to secure a new drinking water source. These are vital investments in the future of Lancaster County."

Yoakum is a life-long Nebraskan and has lived in both rural and urban areas of the state. As a Lincoln resident, she has served with numerous non-profit organizations including Nebraska Appleseed, El Centro de las Americas, Lincoln Public Schools, YWCA of Lincoln, and Planned Parenthood.

Yoakum's devotion to people and building more inclusive communities has earned her endorsements from Women Who Run, Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, and many other elected officials in Nebraska. To learn more about her campaign and to volunteer or donate, visit her website at www.christaforlancaster.com.

The Lancaster County Board of Commissioners is responsible for the administration of various programs established by the Legislature. The board adopts the County budget and manages County funds. They also care for County property and set tax levies and salaries for Lancaster County officials. Members of the County Commission also serve as the Board of Equalization which is responsible for the review and approval of tax exemption applications. County Commissioners adopt legislative priorities for the benefit of Lancaster County and its constituents prior to each legislative session.

Quotes are from:

Lincoln Journal Star, Margaret Reist, December 14, 2023

https://journalstar.com/news/local/government-politics/yoakum-runs-for-re-election-to-lancaster-county-board/article_467ff034-9a08-11ee-b18a-7f7c48c09f16.html

ELECT

Chelsea Johnson

Lancaster County
Board of Commissioners



Combating climate change is an important priority for Chelsea Johnson. She has served as Deputy Director of Conservation Nebraska since 2014 and currently sits on the board of the Lower Platte South NRD and Lincoln Electric System. In those roles she has worked to lower costs while working to provide critical services and prepare for the future.

Chelsea Johnson is now a candidate for District 4 of the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners which serves the eastern part of Lincoln and Lancaster County. Commissioner Roma Amundson (R) announced earlier that she would not be seeking re-election. Amundson has endorsed Johnson in the 2024 race.

“Local government is a place where we can get beyond the partisanship that we see too often at the state and national level,” Johnson said in a news release. “I’ve worked with Republicans, Democrats and independents to keep our taxes low while providing the important services that people expect. I’m running to build common ground and solve the problems that our community is facing to make a better community for all of us.”

Johnson is a seventh-generation Nebraskan who grew up in Nemaha County, graduated from Johnson-Brock Public Schools and earned a degree from Nebraska Wesleyan University. She is widely respected and has garnered multiple endorsements in addition to Amundson.

To learn more about Chelsea and see the entire list of endorsers, visit

<https://chelseaforlancaster.com/>

Quotes obtained from:

Lincoln Journal Star article by Margaret Reist Jul 17, 2023

https://journalstar.com/news/local/government-politics/chelsea-johnson-lancaster-county-board-election/article_e0d03ada-24cf-11ee-af77-b3514a9764b8.html

Kristin CHRISTENSEN

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



Kristin Christensen has spent her career teaching special education and providing academic intervention services to elementary students in Lincoln Public Schools. This has made Christensen uniquely qualified to serve effectively on the Nebraska State Board of Education. This mother of three is running for District 1 which encompasses parts of Lincoln, Waverly, Raymond Central, and Malcolm school districts. To fully support our schools, Christensen stresses the need to recruit, develop, and retain high quality teachers who can support all students equitably with respect for individual needs.

The seat is currently held by Patsy Koch Johns who is not running for reelection. Patsy Koch Johns has endorsed Christensen.

Christensen believes collaboration between the community and the Board promotes student and teacher success. "Every student has unique needs and I want to ensure that our education system serves all

families and gives every student the opportunity to learn and be successful."*

In addition to Patsy Koch Johns, Christensen has received endorsements from Lincoln Mayor, Leirion Gaylor Baird in addition to many other leaders in local and state government. To see all of Christensen's endorsements and learn more, visit kristinforstateboard.com/.

The State Board of Education is an elected, constitutional body that sets policy and ensures that the State Department of Education functions effectively within the framework developed by the state Legislature and the Board.

**(As quoted by Chase Porter and published on KLIN.com on 8/24/2023, <https://klin.com/2023/08/24/teacher-announces-campaign-for-state-board-of-education-announced-endorsements/>)*

Letter to the Editor

Neighbors & Friends,

Happy Black History Month!

Editor Jean Sanders is always insistent on me writing about my experiences with the Lower Platte South NRD for the County Party monthly newsletter. I believe it has been long overdue but keep in mind, I serve on one seat out of twenty-one for the Board of Directors, and I know there are other Democratic Director Members who can talk about their experiences serving on our local NRD. I am also more than happy to talk about NRD business in person because there's a lot to be involved with and that has been my observation over my time serving.

This month I would like to talk about the institution of the NRD, how and why the Legislature created the Natural Resource Districts, and their governance.

I had to look up the actual state statute in the Nebraska Constitution that creates the authority of NRDs; it is Section 2-3229, R.R.S. 1943. I do know that in 1969 then-Governor Norbert Tiemann signed LB 1357, the legislative mechanism to cede authority from the legislature to localities based upon the watersheds throughout Nebraska over these 12 mandates:

- 1.) erosion prevention and control,
- 2.) prevention of damages from flood water and sediment,
- 3.) flood prevention and control,
- 4.) soil conservation,
- 5.) water supply for any beneficial uses,
- 6.) development, management, utilization, and conservation of groundwater and surface water,
- 7.) pollution control,
- 8.) solid waste disposal and sanitary drainage,
- 9.) drainage improvement and channel rectification,
- 10.) development and management of fish and wildlife habitat,
- 11.) development and management of recreational and park facilities, and
- 12.) forestry and range management.

Back then, the Legislature was getting involved with a lot of controversial flood control structure

debates such as water retention reservoirs versus recreational interests. They also had forestry issues, row crop and soil erosion concerns, etc. So, it was decided by the Legislature, and signed by the Governor, to have these local political decisions gifted to what would be a Board of Directors for the newly created Natural Resources Districts.

The NRDs would be divided based upon the watersheds as opposed to county borders, if applicable, and they would be named after the watersheds they cover. Twenty-four were originally created by this legislation but soon after the inception of NRDs those two merged into one resulting in 23 current Natural Resources Districts across the state.

The Board of Directors would come from sub-districts of "the District," and the number of seats would be based upon the population of the NRD as a whole. The statutory maximum number of Directors is 21, but does range in number, and each sub-district has 2 Directors to represent the area. Only 1 Director member is elected at-Large and all Directors are elected on different cycles with half of the Board on one election cycle and the other half on the following cycle. Terms of service are 4 years and there are no term limits to serving. That is why I say the NRD is always on the ballot and since there are no term limits, it is important to know who your local Director member is who makes decisions which impact the environment, groundwater, and your property tax dollar.

As you have guessed, we're called the Lower Platte South because we live in the southern area of the Lower Platte River Basin. We, as the Board of Directors, govern over 1 million acres worth of land and span across essentially two full counties (Lancaster and Cass) plus 4 partial counties (Seward, Saunders, Butler, and Otoe).

We also have a lot of authority over the water use within our boundaries which include two small aquifers and a major tributary of surface water to the Platte River, and Salt Creek. However, there are a few notable exceptions to the groundwater and surface water authorities the NRD have, but we do partner with other agencies to enforce groundwater and surface water management, a great example is with Lincoln Water System where the City of Lincoln supplies our drinking water.

There's more that I can explain about the creation and jurisdictional authority of NRDs but I would suggest talking to the current Chair of the Lower Platte South NRD, Dave Landis. Some Director Members joke that he is "Father Time" but only because he has over 40 years of service to the Lower Platte South NRD and I believe he was a State Senator when they were created. I have to ask him, but I can't jab at him too hard because this year he gave me all my committee assignments that I asked for, which is a perfect way to end with a little over how the Board is structured to govern.

The Board has statutory officers that make up the Executive subcommittee and from there the different jurisdictional functions are parsed out to four standing subcommittees (Land, Water, Urban, and the Recreation, Forestry and Wildlife subcommittees) and also the administrative budget role of the Finance and Planning Subcommittee. However, there are several ad-hoc subcommittees that fulfill a duty and purpose.

Since there are no term-limits to serving on the NRD, the Executive Subcommittee is mostly made up of members who either have tenure or good standing. The officers are Board Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, the Representative to the statewide Natural Resources District. The last statutory officer is the Past-Previous Chair. The Treasurer is the head of the budget writing Finance and Planning Subcommittee, and that subcommittee is made up of members of the four different standing subcommittees plus three additional Director Members who have tenure.

As I mentioned earlier about not giving Chair Landis too much guff, I retained the 2 subcommittee assignments that I served on last year and gained 1 this year. However, each start of the calendar year, the entire Director members go through a process where we can reshuffle our subcommittee assignments. We just recently went through our institutional process of that. Last year I was on the Finance and Planning and the Water Subcommittee. This year I kept my spot on the Water subcommittee but got shuffled into the Urban. I also kept my spots on the Mo-Pac Trail, and the Platte River ad-hoc subcommittees.

The Urban subcommittee deals a lot with projects that occur within cities of the NRD—not just Lincoln. But a lot of the projects do occur in Lincoln.

As you can imagine, the Mo-Pac ad-hoc subcommittee is my favorite one to serve on because

we are tasked to complete the connection of the Mo-Pac trail between Lincoln and Omaha.

The Platte River ad-hoc subcommittee is about monitoring the river from the confluence of Salt Creek at Ashland to the Missouri, so nothing too thrilling unless you get me talking about the air boat tour we just recently had to inspect the Platte River this past summer. However, the Platte River Subcommittee is very integral and vital to our NRD and has a lot of impact, so I am very glad to be on it.

Last, I was able to secure a spot on the new ad-hoc subcommittee that I complained about when it was created by the Chair last year; it's the South Salt Creek. That ad-hoc subcommittee is looking at potential flood mitigation projects that span the entirety of the South Salt Creek watershed and there's a lot more to be said on that topic which can be a letter in its own right.

That's all I have to share. Thank you for your time. Again, if you have questions and comments, feel free to ask me, but I do encourage you to reach out to other Directors. As we enter this election cycle, I just want to point out that we have good Democratic incumbents to support as well as possibly picking up more seats with a few Republican incumbents seeking to retire.

I also want to say thank you in advance to my Co-Director of Sub District 7 of the Lower Platte South NRD, Chelsea Johnson. She is foregoing her seat to run for the Lancaster County Board, and I couldn't have asked for a better colleague to help me represent the sub-district.

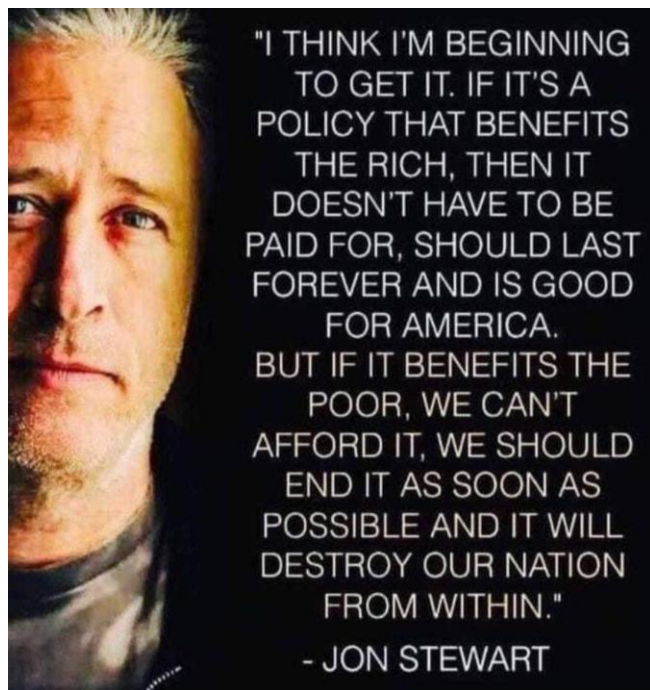
Chelsea has served 2 terms and in her eight years, she has changed the NRD for the better. She will be missed but has my full support to represent District 4 for the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners.

With Pride,
Luke Peterson
LPSNRD Board Member
Subdistrict 7

It's Not a Spending Problem. It's a Revenue Problem.

By Dennis Crawford

A long-time Republican talking point on the budget is that we allegedly have a spending problem and don't have a revenue problem. They have it exactly backwards. It's time to fact check Republican gaslighting on spending and taxes.



The D.C. Republicans believe that rich people don't have enough money and that the poor and middle-class have it too easy.

The GOP is gaslighting us on spending when they claim that spending is allegedly out of control. Let's look at the facts. Federal spending was 31.2 percent of GDP in 2020. Federal spending was 25.6 percent of GDP in 2022. Federal spending will be 24 percent of GDP under Biden's budget. Spending is down significantly since Biden took office.

What is never mentioned by the mainstream press and the GOP is that in the absence of the failed Bush 43 and Trump tax cuts, we would have a balanced budget.

According to the Center For American Progress on March 27, 2023:

"Tax cuts initially enacted during Republican trifectas in the past 25 years slashed taxes disproportionately for the wealthy and profitable corporations, severely reducing federal revenues. In fact, relative to earlier projections, spending is down, not up. But revenues are down significantly more. If not for the Bush tax cuts and their extensions — as well as the Trump tax cuts — revenues would be on track to keep pace with spending indefinitely ...

In other words, the current fiscal gap — the growing debt as a percentage of the economy — stems from legislation that cut taxes, disproportionately for the very rich ... If Congress wants to decrease deficits, it should look first toward reversing tax cuts that largely benefited the wealthy, which were responsible for the United States' current fiscal outlook."

Another long-time false GOP talking point is that tax cuts pay for themselves. According to the GOP aligned Committee For A Responsible Budget in 2017, tax cuts reduce revenues: "While well-designed tax cuts may grow the economy (often not as much as tax reform), there is no case in which they could grow the economy enough to be self-financing. At best, tax cuts can finance a fraction of their costs through faster growth — and maybe not even that. ... Past tax cuts in 1981 and the early 2000s have led to widening budget deficits and lower revenue, not the reverse as some claim."

The Committee For a Responsible Federal Budget has been heavily funded by Republican billionaire Pete Peterson. This organization has long supported cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and other safety net programs. They aren't leftists.

As I will discuss, by any objective measure, the Bush 43 and Trump tax cuts have failed. The expensive tax breaks for the wealthy never trickled down.

By the time Bush left office, the economy had collapsed and was hemorrhaging 800,000 jobs per month. According to Ron Brownstein of *The Atlantic*: "While Bush was in office, the median household income declined, poverty increased, childhood poverty increased even more, and the number of Americans without health insurance spiked."

Bush was the only two term president in American history to preside over a decline in middle class incomes during his two terms as president. Moreover, at the time, Bush had the worst job creation record since Herbert Hoover.

The Trump jobs record was worse. In 2020, the U.S. economy lost a net 10 million jobs. Weekly unemployment claims between March and December 2020 exceeded the worst week of the 2008–09 recession. Trump left office after nearly 50 straight weeks of the worst job losses in American history. Trump was the first president since the Great Depression to leave office with fewer jobs in the country than when he was inaugurated.

Republicans will argue that we should measure Trump's record as of February 2020. They like to pretend that the last eleven disastrous months of Trump's presidency never happened. While Trump didn't cause the pandemic, his performance made everything worse. In 2020, the U.S. had the worst

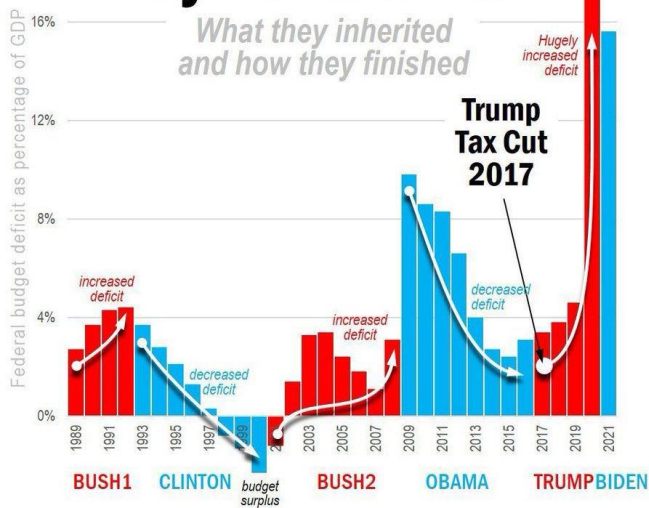
economic outcome of any first world country due to Trump's incompetence.

In any event, let's now give Trump every benefit of the doubt and imagine that his presidency ended eleven months early. Trump promised that the 2017 tax cuts would: 1. Deliver a \$4,000 pay raise to the middle class; 2. Pay for themselves; 3. Kick off an investment boom; 4. Generate 6% GDP growth. 5. Generate more job growth.

None of this happened. Even before the pandemic, middle class incomes rose a paltry 1% adjusted for inflation; the deficit increased from \$585 billion to \$1 trillion; 85% of the tax cuts were spent on dividends and stock buybacks; there was no investment boom; GDP growth was no different than it was under Obama; and job growth declined by 20%. By Trump's own criteria, the 2017 tax cuts were a failure.



U.S. Federal Deficit by President



Despite this record of failure, the GOP wants to extend the Trump tax cuts. That would add \$3.5 trillion to the national debt. The reality is that we could substantially reduce the deficit by repealing the failed Bush and Trump tax cuts for the rich.

"The modern American right doesn't care about deficits, and never did. All that talk about debt was just an excuse for attacking Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and food stamps." - Paul Krugman

Please share this message because the mainstream media and the GOP never mention these facts.

Nebraska such a red state? (Hint: It's not football)

By Jim Schaffer

Nebraska is not the most Republican state in the union although it can feel like it sometimes. According to the Pew Research Center, 47% of Nebraskans are affiliated with the Republican Party; 36% are Democrats. But the state is especially Republican when it comes to presidential elections – Nebraska last voted Democratic in 1964.

There might be many reasons for this tendency, but the most important one is surprisingly simple: Abraham Lincoln. Author Denis Boyles offers this explanation in *Superior, Nebraska: The common sense values of America's Heartland*, a 15-year-old book in which Boyles tries to account for the stark polarization that was already plaguing the country then. Here's how he put it:

"There were no Republicans to be found when the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was passed as part of a plan designed to save the Union. The controversial bill raised the possibility that slavery could be extended into territories where it had previously been banned." At the time everyone expected Nebraska to enter the union as a free state, but Kansas turned out to be something of a jump ball.

Thanks to the machinations of Sen. Stephen Douglas of Illinois, lawmakers agreed to set aside the Missouri Compromise of 1820 which barred slavery in new states. The new law allowed states to choose for themselves. Thus, "popular sovereignty" provided a path forward. If Kansas wanted slaves, argued pro-slavery Democrats, then they would be able to have them. Put it to a vote, they said.

Douglas, widely seen as a future president, was one of the few people who didn't seem particularly interested in settling the slavery question. Instead, he was motivated by building a transcontinental railroad which would provide faster, more reliable transportation across the country. His preferred northern route would pass through Chicago and across a large swath of the Nebraska Territory. He needed proslavery votes to pass his "Nebraska bill."

Boyles continues: "There were several immediate consequences to the act. One was the formation of the Republican Party as an explicitly anti-slavery party. Another was to make Kansas the first battlefield of the civil War. 'Bleeding Kansas' was soon a byword and a rallying cry for those on both sides."

Opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act inspired the formation of the Republican Party, which became the nation's leading antislavery group. It also drew Abraham Lincoln, a former one-term congressman from Illinois, out of retirement. By 1858,

Lincoln's eloquent arguments against slavery would be featured in a famous series of debates with Douglas, as Lincoln unsuccessfully challenged the "Little Giant" for his Senate seat.

Historians William and Bruce Catton called the Kansas-Nebraska Act "the most fateful single piece of legislation in American history." Ironically meant to quiet the furious national argument over slavery, the act instead inflamed emotions and wrenched the country apart. As a result of the legislation's passage, resentments became bloody hostilities, the Democratic Party lay shattered, a new Republican Party was created, and an Illinois lawyer named Abraham Lincoln embarked on the road to the presidency.

Why didn't anyone think Nebraska might choose to be a slave state? For one, there was an impression that the settlers there were particularly accepting of African Americans. This is how a publication by the Federal Writers Project put it: "In the Territory of Nebraska the fight to exclude slavery from within the boundaries was fought in the press and in the pulpit. The word spread that here was a place where the attitude toward Negroes was tempered with tolerance." Besides that, legislators argued that Nebraska did not need a law because slavery did not exist "in any practical form" in the state. The 1860 census showed that of the 81 African Americans in Nebraska, only 10 were enslaved.

In 1861 the Nebraska territorial legislature passed a bill prohibiting slavery, but the governor vetoed it. He claimed that since there were so few slaves in the territory, passing a ban was an unworthy use of time. Not long after, however, the governor's veto was overridden by both the Territory Council and the Territorial House. Consequently, slavery was forbidden in Nebraska.

Meanwhile, Abraham Lincoln, a former congressman nearly five years out of office, had joined the fray. "I was losing interest in politics," he wrote in a letter in 1859, "when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again." In 1860 Lincoln overcame a few better-known contenders including New York Governor William Seward, Ohio Governor Salmon Chase, and newspaper editor Horace Greeley to claim the Republican Party's nomination for president.

Even as Republicans met to organize a national party, Free State Kansas partisans organized to defend their territory against pro-slavery incursions from Missouri and from Democratic towns on the Kansas side—Atchison, Leavenworth, Shawnee Mission, and Lecompton. The pro-slavery faction spawned local guerilla bands with Klan-like names including the Sons of the South and the Blue Lodge.

Violence spread. A pair of Democratic presidents, Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan, lent support to local pro-slavery forces. In 1858 a Kansas referendum was held, and the anti-Democratic result pointed the way for a century and a half of Republicanism. When Kansas joined the Union in January 1861 on the eve of the Civil War, it was as a free state, embracing Lincoln, the Republican Party, and a deep commitment to end slavery.

"The events of the 1850s" had a big effect on Kansas," historian Craig Miner explained to Boyles when he asked about the paucity of Democrats. "I think you'd have to say [Bleeding Kansas] is one big reason. Out here schools teach kids about Roosevelt and the New Deal and LBJ, Martin Luther King and civil rights but they're also taught about a homegrown conflict that was not only a shooting war but also a political one. It involved Republicans facing off against Democrats. And no one is sorry that the Democrats lost."

Boyles concluded that what it meant to be a Republican—or a Democrat—was permanently fixed for so many generations by events in the 1850s. Given the issues involved, at least it's understandable. "What's far harder to grasp," Boyles wrote, "is the degree to which much that's followed has only served to reinforce the political affiliation and to put off the emergence of Kansas Democrats as a serious political force."

Republicans were briefly voted out during the Dust Bowl years, but by 1940, Kansans had again turned away from the Democrats. Even Harry Truman, from just across the river in Missouri, couldn't break the Democrats' losing streak. After Truman came Eisenhower, a legitimate Kansan, a son of Abilene, a solid, middle-of-the-road Republican, and a genuine military hero with a style of governance that appealed to Kansans' general disdain for political theatrics.

Nothing has fundamentally altered political affiliations in Kansas, or to our point, Nebraska either during the half century since. What has changed, however, is what the parties represent. Since the Civil Rights era Republicans have elected to align themselves with the overlords of American society while the Democrats are generally backing social underdogs. But few people have changed parties—Nebraskans not being noted, especially, for liking change (i.e., "Let's run the fullback!").

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Are you working for Inclusion, Diversity, and Gender equity?

The U.N. Refugee Agency lists some ideas that were adapted from multiple sources by C Harper Jantuah.

Simple everyday mindful, intentional actions you can take to be more inclusive:

- ✓ Consciously adapt your behavior to connect better with people who are not the same as you.
- ✓ Actively seek a range of views by bringing people together with different backgrounds and capabilities.
- ✓ Seek coaching or guidance on how to interact with others who are different from you.
- ✓ Consciously develop an appreciation and respect for people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- ✓ Show an appreciation and respect for those who have a different style and approach to your own.
- ✓ Become comfortable with constructive challenge and encourage others to speak up if they have an alternative point of view. It may lead to better results.
- ✓ Make time to discuss cross-cultural issues when they arise.
- ✓ Don't assume that people who work differently—or even less—are less committed; they may be working smarter.
- ✓ Challenge assumptions; don't assume anything.

Nuts: MAGA Republicans Believe That Trump's Presidency Ended In February 2020

By Dennis Crawford



Trump is the only American president to launch a deadly coup in an attempt to steal an election.

MAGA Republicans like to argue that we should evaluate Trump's record as president as of February 2020. They also prefer to pretend that the last eleven disastrous months of Trump's presidency never happened. Did Trump's presidency end eleven months early? Was everything awesome in February 2020? Does Trump deserve any credit for the low unemployment rate at that time? Let's take a look at the record.

MAGA Republicans never mention that unemployment peaked at 10% in early 2009 during the Bush recession. By the time, Obama left office, unemployment had been reduced to 4.7%. The economy had created jobs for a then record 75 consecutive months.

Unemployment was 3.5% in February 2020. However, the record indicates that most of the drop in the unemployment rate since the end of the Bush recession occurred during the Obama presidency. Economists credit the 2009 Recovery Act for the economic growth during the Obama years. Only three Republicans voted for the 2009 Recovery Act. Many Republicans openly said that they wanted Obama to fail so they could regain power.

Trump's supporters like to brag that black unemployment hit a record low in early 2020. Let's put that into its proper historical context. Obama reduced black unemployment from 16.6% to 7.4%. Black

unemployment declined to 6% by February 2020. Once again, most of the reduction occurred before Trump took office.

Trump's presidency didn't end in February 2020. Black unemployment was 9.8% when Trump left office. Since Biden has taken office, black unemployment is now at a record low.

In any event, let's now give Trump every benefit of the doubt and imagine that his presidency ended eleven months early. Trump promised that his 2017 tax cuts would:

1. Deliver a \$4,000 pay raise to the middle class.
2. Pay for themselves.
3. Kick off an investment boom.
4. Generate 6% GDP growth.
5. Generate more job growth.

None of this happened.

1. Even before the pandemic, middle class incomes rose a paltry 1% adjusted for inflation.
2. The deficit increased from \$585 billion to \$1 trillion; Trump added \$4.7 trillion to the national debt before the pandemic.
3. 85% of the tax cuts were spent on dividends and stock buybacks; there was no investment boom.
4. GDP growth was no different than it was under Obama; and
5. Job growth declined by 20%.

By Trump's own criteria, the 2017 tax cuts were a failure.

Our MAGA Republican friends contend that Trump deserves no blame for all of the bad things that occurred in the U.S. after the pandemic hit in March 2020. They ignore his failed response to the pandemic. While Trump didn't cause the pandemic, his performance made everything worse. In 2020, the U.S. had the worst economic outcome of any first world country due to Trump's incompetence.

MAGA Republicans also tend to ignore the numerous unhinged statements that Trump made about the pandemic. Here are the highlights or lowlights:

January 24:

"China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus. The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency. It will all work out well. In particular, on behalf of the American People, I want to thank President Xi!"

February 7:

"I just spoke to President Xi last night, and, you know, we're working on the — the problem, the virus. It's a — it's a very tough situation. But I think he's going to handle it. I think he's handled it really well."

February 10:

"I think China is very, you know, professionally run in the sense that they have everything under control. I really believe they are going to have it under control fairly soon."

February 27:

"It's going to disappear one day, it's like a miracle."

March 10:

"It will go away. Just stay calm. It will go away."

March 13:

"I don't take responsibility at all."

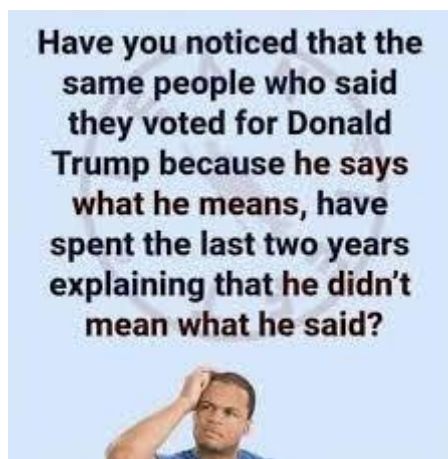
April 23:

"The virus dies quickest in sunlight. . . . I said supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or in some other way. I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?"

August 20:

"We're in the closing moments of the pandemic."

"The coronavirus crisis is 'nearing the final turn.'"



Trump's own actions are a good example of his failed response to the pandemic. The former TV reality star couldn't protect himself and his own followers from the virus.

Trump held a super spreader event at the White House on September 26 to mark the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. At least 37 cases of the coronavirus were confirmed within 12 days after Barrett's nomination event on September 26.

Both Donald Trump and Melania tested positive after this event. The former indicted, twice impeached president almost died. When Trump was admitted to Walter Reed Hospital with Covid symptoms, Mark Meadows, his then chief of staff, feared that the orange hued mogul might die.

Trump not only got himself sick; he also infected his own diehard followers. Stanford University

scientists found that the Trump rallies ultimately resulted in more than 30,000 confirmed cases of Covid-19. They also concluded that the rallies likely led to more than 700 deaths, even including people who didn't attend the rallies.

Just to show how much of an outlier the U.S. was from better performing First World, developed countries, here are Covid-19 deaths per million people (adjusted for population) as of December 2020:

Australia: 35

South Korea: 12

Norway: 74

New Zealand: 5

Taiwan: 0.3

U.S.: 948

According to a study from *The Lancet*, Trump's incompetence caused over 200,000 Americans to have unnecessarily perished to this dreaded disease. The U.S. had the worst response to the pandemic of the First World industrialized countries.

Trump's failure to mitigate the virus wrecked the good economy he inherited from President Obama. When Trump was in office, the unemployment rate increased from 4.7% to 6.7%, 12 million Americans lost insurance, 8 million Americans fell into poverty and the annual deficit increased from \$585 billion to \$3.1 trillion.

In 2020, the U.S. economy lost a net 10 million jobs. Weekly unemployment claims since March 2020 exceeded the worst week of the 2008–09 recession. Trump left office after nearly 50 straight weeks of the worst job losses in American history. Trump was the first president since the Great Depression to leave office with fewer jobs in the country than when he was inaugurated.

Trump lost the 2020 election largely due to his failed response to the pandemic. Even though Trump's closest advisors told him that he had lost, he persisted in trying to steal the election. He filed — and lost — numerous frivolous lawsuits aimed at overturning the election. In addition, Trump filed several slates of fraudulent electors. He also failed in an attempt to convince Mike Pence to steal the election.

After all of these nefarious schemes failed, Trump incited a mob of his unhinged followers to attack the U.S. Capitol to stop the certification of the election. He even encouraged the mob to murder his vice president.

A bipartisan Senate report found that at least seven people died in connection with the January 6 attack. About 140 police officers — 73 from the Capitol Police and 65 from the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington — were injured, the departments have said.

When Trump “left office, the murder rate was higher, drug overdose deaths had increased, and the abortion rate had gone up for the first time in decades. America was more bitterly divided, and deficits increased each year of his presidency. His early Covid lies helped fuel an immense amount of confusion and almost certainly cost American lives. And his entire sorry term was capped by a violent insurrection fueled by an avalanche of lies.” David French.

Trump and the Republican Party paid a high political price for this catastrophe. Trump was the first president since Herbert Hoover to preside over the loss

of the White House, the House, and the Senate in a single term.

Despite this disastrous presidency, Trump is running for a second term and is the GOP frontrunner. We must all be vigilant in making sure that Trump makes history by losing a second consecutive presidential election. It's America or Trump in 2024. Democracy and freedom are at stake. Now let's get it done!

P.S. — You're going to want to save this message for when Trump and his propaganda machine try to rewrite history.



Four things Republicans should be aware of.

County Party Spaghetti Feed

Pictures on the following pages are from our February
4th Spaghetti Feed Candidate Forum! 🍝
Thank you to all who helped!

Congrats to our winning chefs!

🏆 1st: Carol Blood for Congress

🏆 2nd: Christa Yoakum for Lancaster County
Commissioner

🏆 3rd: John Yoakum for NRD

Thank you to the candidates who joined us:

Carol Blood for Congress (CD1)

Seth Derner for Legislature (LD21)

Jason Prokop for Legislature (LD27)

Eliot Bostar for Legislature (LD29)

Kristin Christensen for State Board of Education
(District 1)

Christa Yoakum for County Commission (District 2)

Chelsea Johnson for County Commission (District 4)

Arlyn Uhrmacher for Southeast Community College
Board (District 5)

Gary Aldridge for Lower Platte South NRD (District 4)

Marty Nader for Lower Platte South NRD (District 4)

John Yoakum for Lower Platte South NRD (District
5)

Lisa Lewis for Lower Platte South NRD (District 9)

Thank you to our planning team who made this event
possible!

Roger Eschliman

Mary Fischer

Ted Kessler

Michael Marcheck

Chris McCoy

Rachele Walter

Thank you to our generous sponsors!

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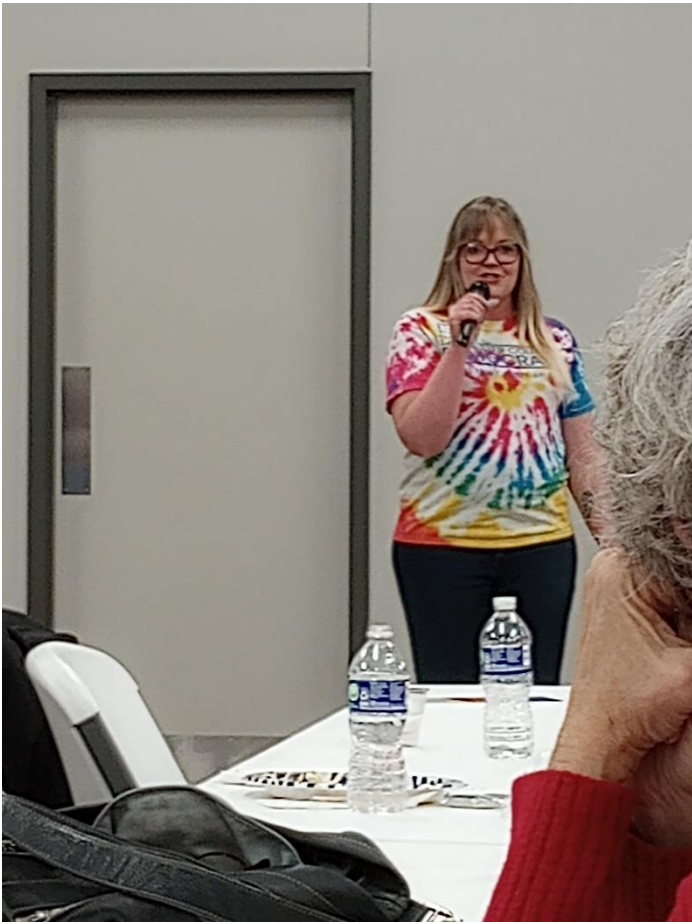
Jason Prokop for Legislature

DiAnna Schimek

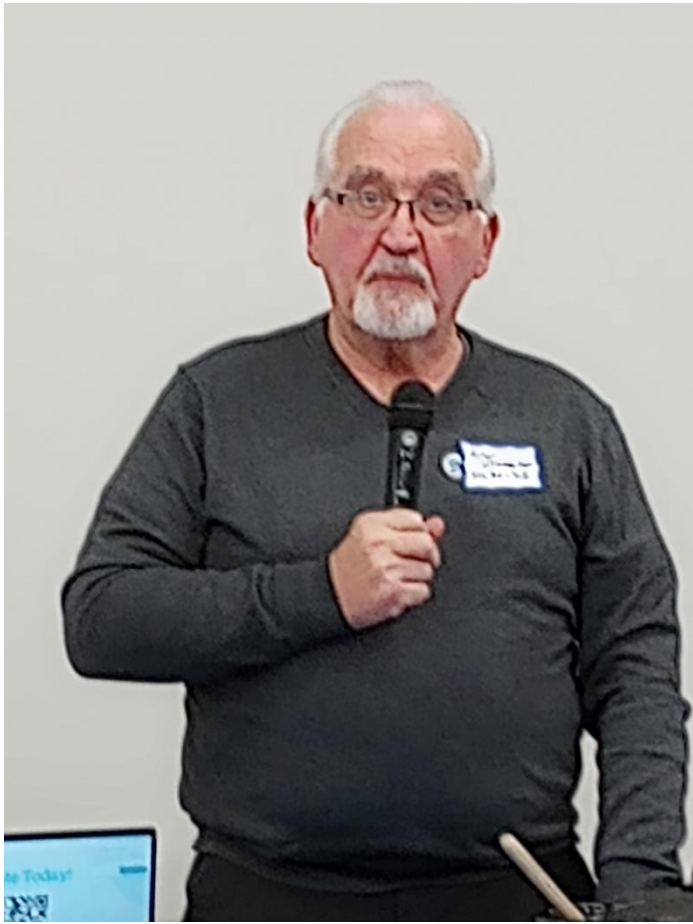
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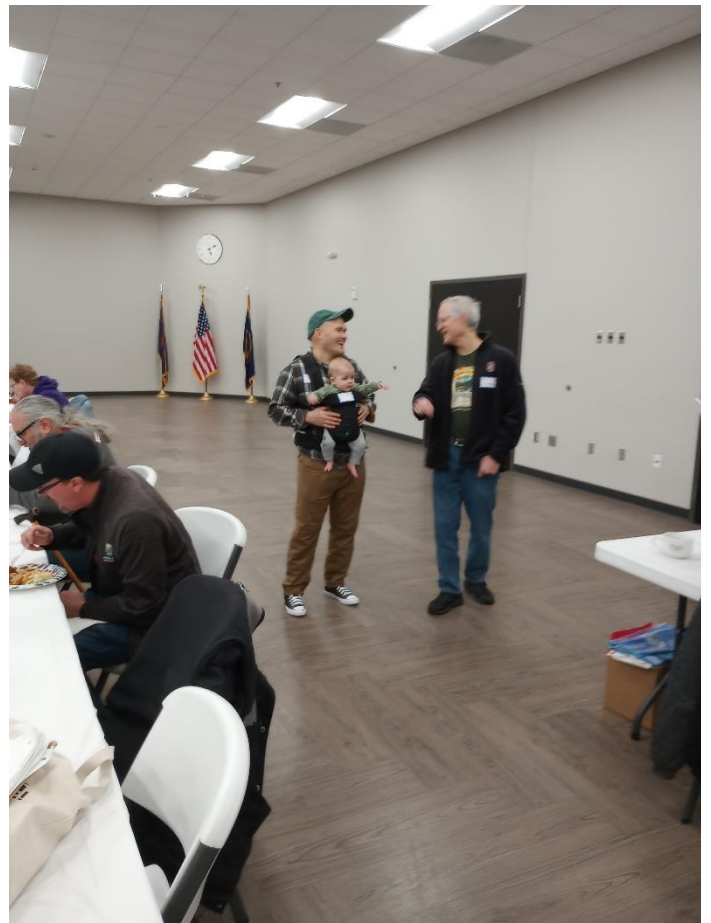
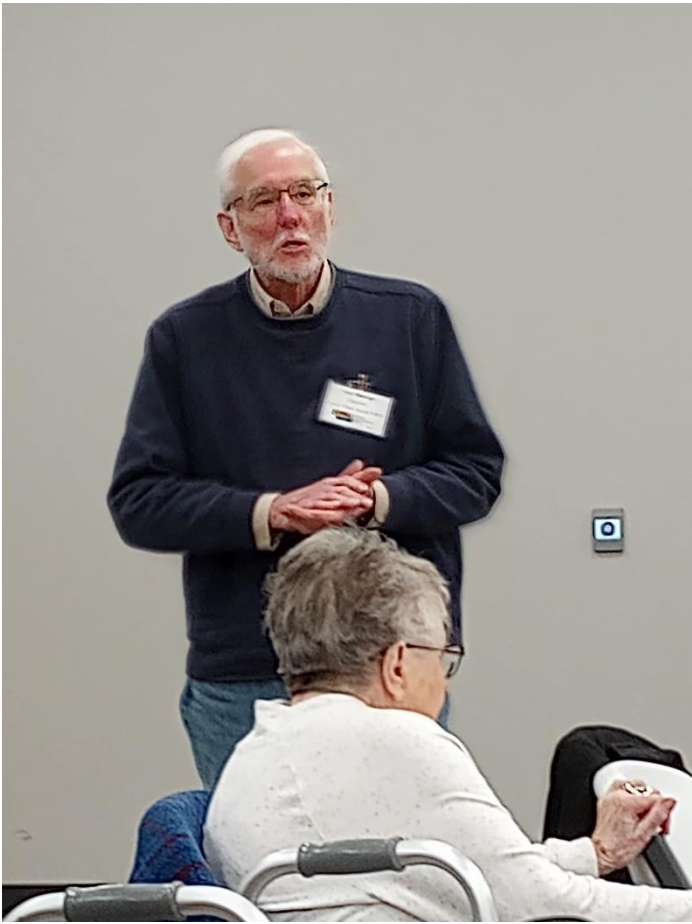
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Commissioner Christa Yoakum











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