

Fellow Nebraskans, Friends All!

I stand before you today to say that we have become a country where the narrative has become US vs THEM. Contempt, distrust, and fear are poisoning our society. In Nebraska, we have an amazing one house system known as the Unicameral. The Unicameral has worked for decades because its success depends on collaborative policy makers. Not Republicans, Not Democrats, Not Libertarians.... but elected officials who must work together for the greater good of all Nebraskans. Unfortunately, many in our state government have taken on that same US vs THEM dynamic we are seeing across our country. This is killing our democracy.

I know we can do better and see opportunities for effective change. We can begin to make things better by building relationships and bridging these divides. We can transform division and contempt into understanding and connection. We can and will move the needle if we remember that the first thing, we must do for this to happen is to Listen First to Understand. We do not need to agree or disagree, we need only to listen to each other. We don't need to shut others down nor expect that they should change their opinion. Instead, we can reflect and show they are heard as we try to bridge our differences. We can change our communities for the

better and lift all Nebraskans up regardless of who they are, what they look like, how they identify or where they are from. We must prioritize making Nebraska feel like home by working together. We have the power to dismantle bias, prejudice, and stereotypes. We have the power to bridge that division. This power will help defeat toxic polarization and help heal our neighborhoods, our communities, and our state. Let's stop using words like conservative, progressive, liberal, far right, and other terms that label Nebraskans. Political operatives from all parties love to use these labels to try and influence your vote and instill fear with half-truths and lies about good people. None of us are blind to how polarizing those words can be. Today, I say, let's get back to our roots and use words like Nebraskans...friends...neighbors. I know that when Nebraskans stand together and work on issues and conduct ourselves in ways that create change for the better, our lives do get better as do the lives of those we love, our neighbors, our families, and our friends. We can lead by example and expect that same from those we elect to office.

Let's get back on the path of good policy and make it first about our people. Good policy that brings prosperity to all Nebraskans exposing the true history of property taxes over the last 3 decades and start shoring up long-term solutions to fix these problems, not simply shift the tax burden; policy that allows us to

maintain public safety and improve public health because Nebraskans deserve to feel safe and be well; needed policy that protects taxpayers investment in Nebraska's infrastructure in support of our farmers and businesses and providing dependable transportation services to our residents; and lastly continue to encourage educational opportunities that foster quality, fairness and equity.

Friends, I'm a true Nebraskan. I was born in Mc Cook and raised in Adams County. I raised my own family in Sarpy County. I love Nebraska, but I know we can do better. Our collaborative efforts are much stronger than the voices of a few and we can build a better Nebraska. We do this by inspiring hope and working to transform our divisions. We must get back to normalizing listening, extend grace and seek out common interests. We can start to tear away the labels that divide us. We can invite honest conversation where we are active listeners and we create real human connections, and then start to have meaningful civic action. Let's spread hope and courage and follow that up with actions that matter. It starts with us, its starts today.

And so, friends, I am here today to put actions behind these words and say that I would be honored to be your next Nebraska Governor and that today I am launching my campaign

With that, I say Onward and Upward to a better Nebraska, let's leave here today remembering that our collective voices are strong, and we have great power when we work together. I have faith in you. Together we will build a better future on understanding, trust, and grace. We can heal Nebraska by making ourselves immune to the toxic polarization one person at a time. Let's go out and make a difference today for a better tomorrow for all. Thank you friends and I look forward to my conversations with all of you in the future.