

LEGISLATURE – District 12

Joseph Hering (Republican)
Website: vote4hering.squarespace.com

Greg Hosch (Democrat)
Website: www.GregHosch.com

Merv Riepe (Republican)
Website: www.VoteRiepe.com

Questions List:

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| Other | Revenue/ spending | Urban/Rural | Jobs Creation (Legislature) | Personal Story | Homosexuality |
| Biographical | Tax | Gambling | Children's Laws | Constitution | Past President |
| Motivation | Legislative Focus | Education purpose | Conflict of Views | Family | Anything else? |
| Qualifications | Immigration | Healthcare | Parental Rights | Personal/Political | |
| Sustainable Development | Voter ID | Justice system | Amendment | Abortion/capital punishment/etc. | |
| | | Decency | | | |

Other - Information about making contact with the candidate.

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| Joseph Hering | 3/18/14, 4:38pm, left message giving phone number and email address. 3/21/14, 6:15, "mailbox not set up". Located work number. 3/25/14, 10:37am, told to call back in 15 minutes. 3/25/14, 11:00am, spoke with candidate, said to email questionnaire "will do tonight." 3/25/14, 11:15am, questionnaire emailed. Answers copied from email response received 3/27, 3:03pm. |
| Greg Hosch | 3/18/14, 4:37pm, left message giving phone number and email address. 3/20/14, 9:43 am, candidate emailed to get questionnaire. 3/20/14, 12:43pm, emailed questionnaire. 3/25, 7:17pm, left phone message. Answers copied from email response received 3/25, 8:22pm - two days before deadline. |
| Merv Riepe | 3/18/14, 4:34pm, spoke with candidate while he was walking the neighborhood. He said to send the questionnaire. 3/18/14, 11:39pm, questionnaire emailed. 3/19/14, 9am, candidate called to verify questionnaire had been sent. Answers copied from email response received Wed, 19 Mar 2014 3:44pm |

Biographical - Please include biographical information you consider important for voters to know and/or reference your website.

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| Joseph Hering | I have been involved in student government at the college level, served an internship at the Unicameral, earned an Associates degree, Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree, studied Public Administration and stay up to date on current events. I feel my variety of work experiences will contribute to better serving the people of Nebraska. My website is vote4hering.squarespace.com |
| Greg Hosch | I am a native Nebraskan, born and raised in Fremont. My wife Shelly and I have lived in the district for 20 years and raised our daughter Briley, a nursing student at Clarkson College and a son Spencer, a sophomore at Millard South High School. I have an AAS Degree in Computer Science. I am a Vietnam era Veteran serving in the U.S. Army from 1969-1971 receiving an honorable discharge. I am the Vice-President of Racing for Omaha Exposition & Racing Inc., overseeing the operations at Horsemen's Park and Lincoln Race Course in Lincoln with over 200 employees. Additionally, I serve as General Manager of Horsemen's Park in Omaha. I also serve on the Board of Directors of the Thoroughbred Racing Associations of North America. As an active member in the Omaha Community I have helped coach my daughter's softball teams when she played for the Quakes, Sizzle and Nebraska Sluggers. Shelly and I were also active with the KWAA Redskins organization for 7 years while Spencer played football for the Redskins. I am a member of Champions Run, Prairie Life Fitness, Q Street Merchants and the YMCA. I plan to use my life experiences and interaction with people from all walks of life to guide my philosophy of government. Please visit my website at www.GregHosch.com . |
| Merv Riepe | Please see my webpage: www.VoteRiepe.com |

Motivation - What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish?

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| Joseph Hering | I feel the time is right for me to serve the people of Nebraska. Serving the people of Nebraska has been a dream of mine and after losing two sisters to cancer recently I am pursuing this dream of mine. I will accomplish as much as possible towards to make Nebraska better. |
| Greg Hosch | I have been personally involved with our State Senators and the Nebraska Legislature over the past 6 years both testifying before committees and interacting with those in the legislature. After that interaction I felt that my life experiences would allow me to be an effective State Legislator. Additionally, my ability to effectively communicate with people from all walks of life, which I do on a daily basis keeps me informed and grounded and is the reason I feel I can effectively represent the people of District 12 and all of Nebraska. I hope to create a bright and prosperous future for generations of Nebraskans to come. |
| Merv Riepe | Long-time interest with commitment to be engaged. |

Qualifications - What three qualifications do you bring to this office?

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| Joseph Hering | My education, my desire, and my beliefs. |
| Greg Hosch | I am a Nebraska Native and lived in District 12 for over 20 years. My wife and I have raised our children in the district and supported their extracurricular activities in the community and the Millard Schools. With a daughter in Nursing School and a son at Millard South I can relate to the challenges and aspirations of District 12 families. As a business leader I have created jobs and have a record of being fiscally responsible and proven success while navigating Horsemen's Park through the recession, smoking ban and entertainment tax over the last 6 years. |
| Merv Riepe | (1) Thirty (30) years of experience in the delivery of health care services in roles that called for leadership and accountability; (2) District resident for 30 years; and (3) commitment to do the right thing within financial constraints. |

Sustainable Development - *In some venues, the term "sustainable development" is tied to the UN Agenda 21 thinking. Others consider conservation of natural resources to be tantamount. Where would you place yourself on environmental issues and why?*

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| Joseph Hering | I do believe that renewable resources must be pursued with extreme vigor; however, group think policies of more feel good rather than do good ideals such as Agenda 21 achieve little. I believe that deforestation combined with population increase has caused a lot of issues for the environment and a Herculean effort of tree planting trees and related fauna can help restore the balance. That along with cleaner methods of production and pursuit of renewable resources will strengthen our economy. |
| Greg Hosch | I do not intend to introduce or support any legislation tied to agenda 21. |
| Merv Riepe | I believe in conservation and protection of the environment but we also must have an economy that can sustain our freedoms and way of life. |

Revenue/spending - *By comparison to many other states, Nebraska is in good financial condition. What will you do to maintain that? What revenue sources would you pursue? How would you define your philosophy on spending?*

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| Joseph Hering | Maintaining the course we are on is a good way to keep the fiscal condition we enjoy in good shape. If revenues needed increasing I would support seeking new means of revenue generation. My philosophy on spending is that a governing body should spend no more than what is necessary to manage the public affairs. |
| Greg Hosch | I am a fiscal conservative and would seek to reduce the reliance on property taxes. |
| Merv Riepe | Continue to balance the budget and evaluate programs with financial and social cost-benefit analyses. |

Tax - *What taxing policies do you recommend? For example, should property tax issues be left up to the counties or should the legislature develop "formulas" that work in both urban and rural areas? Should military retirees be exempt from income tax? Why?*

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| Joseph Hering | Whatever stakeholders are required to pay a particular tax it should be as local as possible to have an equitable tax burden. Taxes should only be adjusted if there is a shortfall or excess and relevant stakeholders should bear no more than their equitable burden. I believe that certain pensions should receive some tax relief. |
| Greg Hosch | Property tax rates are determined and should remain with local government. We should move away from taxing retirement income. |
| Merv Riepe | Taxes in Nebraska are too high. We should not assure all spending is essential spending and need to look for needless duplication and opportunities for efficiencies. Look at all taxes before reductions are made to any. |

Legislative Focus - *In what issue areas do you see yourself introducing legislation?*

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| Joseph Hering | Strengthening the right to have means of self defense on hand, i.e. giving law abiding citizens stronger second amendment rights. Establishing workfare training for unemployed or underemployed citizens. Developing agricultural based fuel projects to pursue efforts to reduce and eliminate uses of fossil fuels. Measures to remove gender inequalities in current statutes. |
| Greg Hosch | Tax reform, Early Childhood Education, Prison Reform and Economic Development. |
| Merv Riepe | We need to evaluate legislation that is now law with the idea some is no longer of value. Legislators should not feel they have to start their term with legislation in hand. |

Immigration - *What role should each level of government have in the immigration issue? From city, to county, to state, to federal?*

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| Joseph Hering | It is the Federal government's responsibility to set the path to citizenship and grant visas. If a more local jurisdiction sets up regulations regarding those who overstay their visas or outright enter the country without permission, then they are just seeking to protect the property rights of their jurisdiction and should have the right to do so. The power of citizenship is the basis of sovereignty and reducing the importance of citizenship takes away a nation's reason for being. |
| Greg Hosch | The federal Government must take the lead in enforcing immigration law. |
| Merv Riepe | Problems should be resolved at the lowest level possible. |

Voter ID - *Should photo ID be required for voting? Why or why not?*

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| Joseph Hering | Yes. To make sure that the voter gets the ballot for the right precinct. There are many issues that affect precincts differently and not voting in the right precinct adversely affects many different issues and representatives. At this time photo ID is mandatory for receiving health care benefits according to federal mandate by the ACA, as well the Nebraska law regarding presentation of ID when requested by law enforcement. Aside from needing ID for I9 verification for employment and various requirements for ID for banking or verification of use of SNAP cards the arguments against requiring showing ID fail on their politically motivated points. |
| Greg Hosch | No, there is no proven voter fraud in Nebraska. |
| Merv Riepe | Yes, we need to ensure the integrity of the vote. |

Urban/Rural - *What philosophy drives how you view the diverse needs of urban versus rural residents? An example situation would be the amount of money allocated to road repairs in low population areas where it takes lots more miles of road for fewer people than in the city.*

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| Joseph Hering | The investments in rural districts pays off in ranching and farming which allows larger population areas to exist. Maintaining effective means of transportation helps reduce costs for delivered products and creates demands for products to those lesser populated areas. Without the rural the urban would wither. |
| Greg Hosch | I've lived in both urban and rural communities and believe the issues we have in common take precedence over those issues that divide us. |
| Merv Riepe | One size does not fit all. |

Gambling - *Discuss the pros and cons of government having more revenue from gambling.*

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| Joseph Hering | Managed effectively, gambling is a means of job creation and a way of allowing Nebraska money to stay in Nebraska rather than go to Iowa, Missouri, or South Dakota. Any cons to gambling are already being faced by Nebraska without any benefit of revenue generation. Allowing gambling on a county by county basis would be best for the state. |
| Greg Hosch | Having an additional stream of revenue could shift the tax burden from property taxes and expand funding for education. Any expansion would take a constitutional amendment and a vote of the people. |
| Merv Riepe | I do not favor the expansion of gambling. |

Education purpose - *What do you consider the purpose of public education to be, and do you think Nebraska schools are fulfilling this purpose? What is the state's responsibility concerning "No Child Left Behind"? At what level should the federal government's "Common Core" issue be decided for Nebraska schools and why? Would you support (e.g with vouchers or tax credits) alternative schools (whether charter, home school, private school)? Why or why not?*

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| Joseph Hering | The purpose of public education is to prepare citizens for adulthood and give them the skills to set them up for career success. I feel we can do better in preparing future generations. I believe that academic pursuits are not best suited for everyone. For some a stronger course of education in vocational or technical skills would set them up for better lifelong success. In life there are those who succeed and those who fail. Failure is an indicator that more work is needed or a change of course is required for that individual. I feel that teaching to the 3 basic learning styles and focusing on realm of pursuit (academic, vocational, or technical) would bring better results rather than teaching to the middle without respect to learning style is of no use but to the bookmakers. Especially given the difficulty of retaining educators in Nebraska currently. |
| Greg Hosch | I believe our responsibility is to provide equal access to quality education for all Nebraska school children. We do not have the financial resources for vouchers or tax credits at this time. |
| Merv Riepe | Problems are best resolved at the local level. |

Healthcare - *What responsibility do you see the state government having with regard to health care for the needy?*

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| Joseph Hering | Health and Human Services play an important role and must do what it can to help provide medical care for the needy. Funding for these programs is necessary as must be done as best as possible. The roles of different agencies provide a lot of support and it is important that as much help as possible is provided. |
| Greg Hosch | We have a continued obligation to administer Medicaid funds for the needy and Medicare for seniors. |
| Merv Riepe | The state has some responsibility but the limits of "health care is a right" philosophy needs to be openly discussed. This cannot be a blank check. |

Justice system - *What improvements would you recommend to the justice system? For example, what should be done about the so-called "good time" laws, if anything? Would you approve or disapprove of faith-based solutions being offered? Would you consider certainty versus severity of sentencing? ([Click here for information](#))*

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| Joseph Hering | Doing what is expected should not count as "good time" Studying and passing programs to reduce recidivism and mentoring other inmates to do the same would. Finding a belief in a higher power is all good but not a consideration for reducing time. Learning meaningful skills to use when released does count as well. Neither of the sentencing models have been effective and a new path must be set upon. |
| Greg Hosch | Tougher sentencing for violent offenders who should serve their entire sentences and earn good time rather than automatically receive good time and a sentence reduction based on time served. |
| Merv Riepe | Need to wait for the results of the study in process to present best practices for the prison and parole system. |

Decency - *Should decency laws, including things like sex trafficking, be written at the national, state, county, or local level? What should they include? Who should enforce them?*

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| Greg Hosch | At the National and State level and enforced by law enforcement agencies. |
| Joseph Hering | There are many elements covered by decency laws at each level. I feel considering placing more emphasis on the county level would allow for more representative ideals prevalent in particular counties, i.e. dry counties or Nevada style decency laws. |
| Merv Riepe | We need to punish those who would promote sex trafficking with enforcement at all levels. |

Jobs Creation (Legislature) - *How can the legislature help in job creation? What would you do to make the state more business friendly? What specific ideas do you have for jobs?*

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| Joseph Hering | The legislature can help by creating an economic environment that entices business development. As well as increasing vocational and technical training to students to provide a diverse workforce that is ready for the opportunities presented by new businesses or business expansion. |
| Greg Hosch | State offered incentives for the growth of existing businesses and attracting new Industry and Jobs to Nebraska. |
| Merv Riepe | Need to be competitive in taxes, incentives, education, health care and life style. |

Children's Laws - *When writing laws that affect children, what plan do you have to prevent damage to good home situations from rules designed to protect children from bad home situations?*

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| Joseph Hering | Creating a consensus definition of what a good or bad home situation is difficult and preconceived notions must be taken out of consideration and facts viewed on their own merits. Outlining measures to be taken without bias of gender of parents or guardians is a good start for making a better home environment. Realizing that generational poverty must be broken and aid be contingent upon steps taken to better reduce generational poverty is another key factor |
| Greg Hosch | We should continue to reform laws and services that protect the children in Nebraska. |
| Merv Riepe | My interest is always in what is best for the child. |

Conflict of Views - *When you run into a conflict where your personal views don't agree with your political party, your constituents, a lobbyist and/or some group that has previously generously funded your campaign, how will you decide what to do?*

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| Joseph Hering | When elected I would be serving the constituents for the district I was elected to serve. They would come first. As a public administrator I would be in disagreement with some of my personal views, but my role as a public administrator for the district would be my primary concern. I believe my party is a party of individual freedom and responsibility and pursuing those goals are the hallmark of the party I am affiliated with. |
| Greg Hosch | I will do what is best for my constituents and the citizens of Nebraska. |
| Merv Riepe | Do the right thing. |

Parental Rights Amendment - *Do you oppose or support a Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? Why? (See www.parentalrights.org for proposed language.)*

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| Joseph Hering | I would oppose such legislation. I feel it is an attack on the sovereignty on the United States Constitution and out of line with State constitutional mandates to provide for the public education, as well as contrary to wording already existing in the U.S. Constitution. Not to mention break the sovereignty of the States breaking the framework of the Federal system of government of the United States. |
| Greg Hosch | Our laws and courts should protect the rights of all parents. |
| Merv Riepe | I believe in parental rights; not well enough informed to respond to a constitutional amendment. |

Personal Story - *Please briefly describe a situation where you had to stand alone for what you thought was right when the momentum was pushing the other way. What was the result?*

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| Joseph Hering | There were many academic debates where I did not side with the convenient side to get good grades or gain the graces of an instructor where I faced being an academic outcast. I held my ground in my beliefs and reasoning. I have had grades lowered, lost employment, lost acquaintances; I believe what I believe and will not give an inch when I dig in my heels. |
| Greg Hosch | Trying to protect and save the Live Horse Racing Industry in Nebraska while opponents declare Horse Racing to be dead. We still have Horse Racing in Nebraska. |
| Merv Riepe | Issues and charges of sexual harassment when I had to stand firm with some members of the board who questioned the charges. |

Constitution - *Regardless of the position sought, 'upholding the Constitution' is part of the oath of office. What does taking that oath mean to you?*

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| Joseph Hering | The Constitution is the document defining our society and without it there is anarchy, whether it be the Federal or State Constitution. |
| Greg Hosch | I took an oath in the Military and I take the oath of office very seriously. |
| Merv Riepe | The pledge is a promise to my neighbors and residents within my district to do the right thing regardless of personal costs. I have had one career and if elected will serve without undue influence. |

Family - *What role has your family played in your seeking this office? In holding this position, how do you foresee it affecting your family?*

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| Joseph Hering | My family has helped make me the person I am today. Without their support and guidance I would not be where I am. I see this positively affecting my family. |
| Greg Hosch | My family is 100% supportive of my candidacy. |
| Merv Riepe | My wife is supportive as she understands it is my deep interest in the future of the state to be involved. My son is married with two little ones and he along with his family support me in my determination to serve with integrity. |

Everyone questions - *(Regardless of what office is being sought, we ask the following questions so voters can better predict how you will handle tough issues.)*

Personal/Political - *To what degree should an office holder's personal principles be reflected in political decision making? To whom/what will you go for counsel in decision making?*

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| Joseph Hering | I feel the overriding principle is administering the public affairs as economically efficient as possible. Personal principles will help guide an office holder but the focus must be on the overriding principle. The source I would seek advice from would vary depending on the topic of the indecision and the depth of the indecision. What I have done in the past is to seek out relevant stakeholders and sought advice, knowing that the decision in the end is mine to make but it is better to make sure I am making an informed decision. |
| Greg Hosch | My personal convictions will not over ride what is best for Nebraska and the 12th District and I will continue to welcome the input from the constituents of District 12. |
| Merv Riepe | My service is at the pleasure of the residents of my district. I make myself available to these residents. I would also look to individuals-beyond lobbyist-who I personally trust to provide insight and factual support. |

Abortion/capital punishment/etc. - *What definition do you give for each of these terms: pro-life, pro-choice? How do you define yourself and how did you arrive at that view? How does your position relate to the death penalty, embryonic stem cell research, and physician-assisted suicide?*

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| Joseph Hering | Personally, I would not choose abortion if a woman was carrying a child of mine; however as it did happen in my past, a woman did not want to carry a child of mine and aborted it. As much pain as I felt at that, it is a woman's right to choose. Taking a public administrators role and viewing generational poverty and demographic considerations the lesser of the costs leans towards pro choice. My stance as being pro capital punishment is not related, in my mind, to my stance on women's reproductive rights. Moral considerations in the realm of reproductive rights are a part of individual belief, but in administering the public affairs regarding capital punishment different considerations must be given greater credence. As a civilized society we must have rules and punishments and the ultimate punishment is fit for ultimate crimes, plus it is less costly and less vindictive to remove a person who has earned the death penalty, by their own actions, from society rather than to let them live on. Euthanasia is also separate as it is more humane than allowing a person to waste away in a medicated haze until their organs give out, as I have seen many times with family members that have lost their battles with cancer. There is a point of no return when even if a cure was found a person's organs are to far gone to come back and it would be more humane to allow a person to pass with dignity. Having a set of guidelines regarding euthanasia is, in my eyes, is another hallmark of a civilized society. |
| Greg Hosch | I consider myself to be pro life. I support the current state laws concerning Stem Cell Research. |
| Merv Riepe | I am prolife but support the death penalty for those that create heinous crimes. |

Homosexuality - *Some consider same-sex relationships should carry the same rights and privileges as traditional marriage. Some view homosexuality as an issue of potential discrimination on the level with race or ethnicity. Some consider it a matter of personal privacy. Some say marriage, for numerous reasons, should remain defined by government as between one man and one woman. Some say children should be raised by a mother and a father and that they are being forgotten in today's discussions on the subject. With which group's philosophy do you most closely agree, and why?*

Joseph Hering Marriage in the eyes of the public administrator is two citizens of a certain age making a "permanent" relationship. The will of the people spoke and Nebraska has defined marriage as being between a man and a woman and have written that in the State's Constitution. A person's sexual orientation is a matter of personal privacy, even straight people such as myself, accept that those in the LGB community must not be discriminated against, even to the point of understanding transgender discrimination falls under gender discrimination, Q is merely a slur and little else, adding more and more dilutes the importance of seeking equal treatment for the LGB community, in my opinion. I spent several years being raised by a single parent and several of my friends have been as well. I feel that a single parent can effectively raise a child, although it is more difficult and while there are benefits of a two parent household, I do not feel that children are being forgotten, I feel that children are forefront with many different programs and efforts. Children are the most important resource to an society for they will take over as older generations shuffle off this mortal coil and it is the preparing them to take over the public affairs are the most important issues.

Greg Hosch Regardless of my personal views I feel the state should recognize the legal rights of all Nebraska citizens.

Merv Riepe I support the Nebraska constitution: marriage is between one woman and one man. Benefits are the decision of the employer.

Past President - *What key considerations did you use in deciding how you voted for President in 2012?*

Joseph Hering Whom did I feel was a better candidate and would guide the nation better.

Greg Hosch Based on the leadership the candidate will provide for our nation.

Merv Riepe Who best embraced the freedoms of this great country.

Anything else? - *Declare anything else you want voters to know about you.*

Joseph Hering I describe myself as a fiscal conservative and a social moderate. I, like you, don't want to pay any more taxes than I have to and want to enjoy my life as much as I can while respecting others as I expect them to respect me. I believe in paying my bills and not spending more than I take in. I believe that it is more important to work towards a better tomorrow than splurge for today. I would very much appreciate your vote and ask for your vote. Thank you for reading this and I hope you have a good day.

Greg Hosch I have been personally involved with our State Senators and the Nebraska Legislature over the past 6 years both testifying before committees and interacting with those in the legislature. With 17 new State Senators being elected this year I believe my previous experience at the Capitol will allow me to hit the ground running. Additionally, on a daily basis I am very fortunate to be able to interact with people from all walks of life. Young and old, working and retired, white collar and blue collar, bankers, bricklayers, lawyers, teachers, electricians, laborers, rich and poor and everywhere in-between, people from all walks of life. That interaction is what will enable me to effectively represent all of the people of not only District 12 but all of Nebraska in the Legislature. As always I will work hard to create a bright and prosperous future for generations of Nebraskans to come.

Merv Riepe [nothing further noted]