

Legislature – District 16

Lydia Brasch (Republican)

Website:
<http://www.lydiabrasch.com/>

Scott Japp (Republican)

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Scott-Japp-for-Legislature-District-16/551463424930288>

Questions List:

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

Other - Information about making contact with the candidate.

Lydia Brasch Incumbent. 3/18, email offer made to Legislature candidates who have only one opponent to answer questionnaires even though both names will appear on both Primary and General election ballots. 4/4, 8:20pm, email reminder. Candidate explained busy with Legislature still in session. 4/13, 10:34pm, reported working on it. 4/14, 11:00am called to say nearly done. Answers copied from email response received Mon, 14 Apr 2014 11:19am.

Scott Japp 3/18, email offer made to Legislature candidates who have only one opponent to answer questionnaires even though both names will appear on both Primary and General election ballots. Candidate emailed to ask for questionnaire. 3/23, 3:43pm, questionnaire emailed. Answers copied from email response received Mon, 31 Mar 2014 8:19pm.

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

Lydia Brasch www.lydiabrasch.com

Scott Japp I have lived and worked in Washington County, Nebraska nearly my entire life. I graduated from Arlington High School in 1974 and the University of Nebraska (UNL) in 1978 with a BS degree from the College of Agriculture. After graduating from UNL, I worked in the construction and grading business as a construction supervisor on multimillion dollar projects, which included worldwide resorts and residential developments in Asia, Europe, and the United States of America. Five years ago, I returned to Nebraska to help my family's business.

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

Lydia Brasch My work with constituents, the Legislature, four legislative committees (3 as Vice-Chairwoman), appointment to BI LLD [The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD) is the only leadership training program designed exclusively for Midwestern legislators.], and 2 other National Committees has served others well. I would like to continue and build upon my experiences and work to bring even more opportunities to those I serve.

Scott Japp Five years ago, I ran and was elected to the Pappio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (PMRNRD) board to represent my constituents' concerns of overspending and increased taxes in water management. When we have a declining citizen population base, which is augmented with an increase in illegal immigration, we need change in our tax systems and our way of doing business. The reasons I am running for the Legislature are: a. 50% of UNL and higher education graduates leave the state for better paying jobs after graduation. I believe the State needs to implement or support programs by the private sector to stem this brain drain. b. People of wealth are moving out of Nebraska due to high property taxes. Therefore, taxes need to be eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level for the wealthy to invest in Nebraska's future. c. Wages have been stagnant for decades, and the State needs to encourage better-paying jobs. d. We need to curtail welfare expansion and put limits on governmental welfare spending. e. Governmental agencies are not protecting our property rights. I believe that legislation must be implemented to protect these rights. If these rights are not protected, the only people who will be left in Nebraska are the monopolistic business interests and welfare recipients. f. State aid for education needs to be given on a per-student basis in the form of vouchers. This would give parents control of how and where they choose to educate our children. This would encourage competition and efficiency in our schools' financing system, since our present State-aid formula encourages wastefulness. When private schools educate the same financially disabled students and achieve higher test and achievement scores, the State is doing something wrong in the allocation of resources. The State of Nebraska also needs to pay for student education, not local property tax dollars. We can certainly divert some level of sales tax dollars to support the education of our children as other growing states have done. g. The State of Nebraska must protect landowners' land and water rights and not take away these rights to support economic recovery in other states.

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

Lydia Brasch -- Extensive and proven leadership skills, including crisis situations such as the flooding along the Missouri River with 2 of our 3 counties impacted. -- Ability to understand, communicate and provide outreach services for constituents that include ability to communicate effectively with federal government issues. -- Broad hands on experience and ability to work with communities, private business, agri-business, government, government agencies and our three branches of government: Executive, Judiciary and Legislative.

Scott Japp As a business owner working with governments in the construction and agriculture field, I have the knowledge and experience to negotiate and get legislation passed to help my constituents. My tenacity and understanding of legislation, the budget process, and bureaucracy of government agencies will aid me in cutting unnecessary spending in government. I will not provide lip service to get elected.

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?

Lydia Brasch	In Agriculture, we are first and foremost stewards of land and livestock; some vested and invested now for many generations. Protection of these assets as a state is much more than a lifestyle and livelihood; it is keeping the future of those that follow us sound and sustainable.
Scott Japp	Conservation is saving our natural resources, soil, and water. I believe in using our environmental resources wisely for the benefit of our economy. However, to use the term "sustainable development" as a ploy to take land away is unjustified in every way. I place myself on the side of the landowner, unless the landowner is abusing their resources and making unwise decisions, which could impact future generations. The State has the responsibility to safeguard its citizens' rights to own and maintain the land.

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?

Lydia Brasch	Nebraska does not spend money it does not have; our Constitution requires a balanced budget and does not allow for a deficit. In 2010 when I took my office the State had a projected deficit of \$896 million dollars, we used \$200 million of our cash reserve to meet fiscal obligations. Today Nebraska has \$1.2 billion dollars of our combined cash reserve and cash general fund, fiscally sound and practical to provide responsible tax relief. Nebraska needs to continue working to bring more employment opportunities to our state that complement our rural economic engine. We must work to keep current business sound and provide avenues for growth. As a fiscal conservative, my 4 years in office there were no tax increases. This year, 2014 legislation passed with bring \$412 million of tax relief over the next 5 years, the next session in 2015 will also work to provide additional tax relief and cuts.
Scott Japp	Nebraska, in the short term, is financially sound due to over taxation and a healthy farm economy. However, this excessive taxation will cause more people to retire and leave the State with their assets. We need to diversify the economy to meet the challenges of the future. WE NEED TO CUT PROPERTY TAXES! The State needs to allocate financial resources to the local level to reduce the burden of property taxes. State spending must be curtailed to inflation, but not outpace inflation altogether like our current governments. Governments must be accountable and held to reasonable spending standards. Growing economies are a result of low taxes and an educated work force. Therefore, lowering and eliminating fees/taxes is a benefit for all.

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?

Lydia Brasch	There must be a balance between state and local taxation. Formulas are being developed and considered to better create this balance to ensure fairness and alleviate undue tax burdens at both levels. Yes, military retirees should be exempt because of the sacrifice they and their families have made to ensure our freedom as a free nation. This year there was a first step in legislation to provide tax relief for our military.
Scott Japp	I would drastically reform the State-aid formula to schools. Subsidizing wastefulness just encourages more incompetence. A voucher system for students would empower parents and encourage competition and efficiency in our school system. All retirement pay, including military pay and Social Security pay, should be tax exempt from income tax in this State. We need to encourage people to retire in Nebraska, not drive them out of the State.

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

Lydia Brasch	In 2014 my priority bill LB144 was to provide Ag Land Valuation tax relief from 75% to 65%. We must continue to provide tax relief broadly. Legislation with intent to support and protect well-being of families without intrusion. I believe we must also ensure that our communities are safe, that our children have a sound education that they may be work ready upon graduation from high school, technical college or a 4 year college. We need to be watchful and aware of children at risk, invest in their needs in preventive measures instead of discovering problems much too late that in turn create larger problems that hurt not only them, but endanger society as well.
Scott Japp	I would introduce legislation to reform State aid for the University System and state-wide public school system, stop the issuing of bonds without voter approval, curtail welfare spending, and offer a constitutional amendment for a two-house system for checks and balances on government.

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

Lydia Brasch	Because I am a first generation American and my parents were immigrants from the Ukraine, I take a firm stand to only allow individuals to our country legally on all levels and accounts. Illegal is just that, laws are not respected or followed. Churches sponsored my parents; if we need or want laborers then perhaps businesses could also serve as sponsors.
Scott Japp	State government should support the guest worker program. But, the State of Nebraska should not support and encourage any illegal immigration or illegal workers. Since I have worked for many years in numerous foreign countries and experienced many foreign regulations, guest workers and their employers need to pay for medical costs, payroll taxes if applicable, and any of their own educational costs. Companies should not pass the undue burden of additional costs onto the State social welfare system. Making a guest worker program pay all of the expenses it incurs may result in higher salaries for the current citizen.

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

Lydia Brasch	Yes, photo ID is required for nearly every other official transaction from airlines to social services. Our communities, even the smallest no longer are aware of who everyone in the community is unlike a decade ago where most individuals spent a lifetime in one location. Today's world is more mobile.
Scott Japp	Yes, photo ID should be required for voting. Current photo IDs are required to perform almost all transactions for money, legal documents, etc. in this State. Protecting the privilege to vote is more important than a business transaction in which we must produce an identification card (ID).

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.*

Lydia Brasch There needs to be mutual respect and balance of fiscal obligations between urban and rural. Roads are essential to rural areas as these roads are critical not only for public safety but for commerce as well as in delivering our commodities to our markets. Frequency of travel and population in light of our road use does not equate to economic needs, in our rural areas it is a critical factor in the economics of our areas and the entire state. Our rural areas also need affordable, reliable, high speed Internet access for meeting needs of business, education and now health.

Scott Japp Rural residents have been short-changed for many years due to the lack of population. Nebraskans need access to reliable and efficient infrastructure to support rural and urban economies for the whole State.

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

Lydia Brasch My stand is against gambling, it is not an increased revenue source but taking money from individuals that could be used for daily living expenses and financial obligations to be self-sufficient and provide for themselves and families. Gambling is not economic development; there are social costs and consequences that are incurred with gambling.

Scott Japp Pros: A large amount of gambling revenue could reduce the reliance on property, sales, and income taxes. Cons: With gambling, like all other addictions, people may suffer by making poor judgments and hurting themselves and possibly family members.

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?*

Lydia Brasch Public education is to prepare our children to be job ready, ready to further education or vocational training. The better we can prepare a person for life the first twenty years of their life, the better off they, their families and society will be the remainder of their lives. Federal programs do offer funds, however the problem is there are always expectations, mandates and restrictions we are then required to follow. It is not always as to how we want to educate our children or what we want them to learn, and perhaps contrary to our faith and moral beliefs. Because our state is working to reduce taxes while still meeting public education funding obligations, it will be difficult to add private education tax credits at this time.

Scott Japp We cannot reasonably hope to compete in the 21st century unless our students are properly prepared for the jobs of the future. The legislature, therefore, must take appropriate action to limit brain drain and ensure that our students are able to compete in an increasingly global society. Meanwhile, social engineering programs that discourage local educational control, such as Common Core, must be resisted in their entirety. I would support vouchers and alternative schools. A one-school-fits-all approach is outdated and appears in most cases not to be effective in using State resources. I would let parents decide what teaching system is best for their child.

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

Lydia Brasch We must create a very transparent and clear policy on funding health care for the truly needy and indigent. Government must work to reduce the actual health care cost by carefully examining each layer of associated expense and expenditures plus the peripheral cost factors that increase individual health care costs such as third party entities that add layers of additional costs to health care. If government simply pays for those attached costs, taxpayers need to recognize it does not solve the problems of out of control industry cost standards currently in place. There needs to be tort reform of health care insurance to bring it back into the grasp of affordability and reasonable costs.

Scott Japp Government needs to help those who cannot help themselves. We need to undo the injustice to our mental health situation. 40% to 60% of the prison population is incarcerated due to mental health issues. Prisons are not the place to help the mentally ill. The Health and Human Services Department is a shambles, and new management is needed to reform the department.

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)*

Lydia Brasch I believe we must work with juveniles and their families to identify and address at risk or high risk children early, at risk families, and incarcerated youth and adults early to prevent recidivism. Providing early family based outreach services without intruding on parents' rights, offering and encouraging faith based services and assistance to help families overcome the barriers from keeping individuals and families whole, healthy and job ready/job stable be it present or future. We need to work to identify and break seemingly generational problems associated with poverty and crime.

Scott Japp Good-time laws should be continued unless the prisoner has serious mental health problems. The prisoner with mental health issues, which are harmful to society, should be referred to the proper medical group to be evaluated and given treatment for their condition before being released back into society.

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?

Lydia Brasch I supported such legislation LB 255. Laws and public information needs to be written and enforced at every possible level to protect young men and women from predators and those that would entice or force such behaviors and activity. All of the above. They should include ability to protect the young and venerable from being forced or persuaded to enter into sex trafficking. Penalties should be enacted to increase jail time for those responsible in such activities that are harmful to minors and society as a whole. Create additional rehabilitation and outreach services as well.

Scott Japp I believe the present regulations have served us well. The current law enforcement and judicial system should enforce our current laws and regulations.

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?

Lydia Brasch The legislature must protect existing businesses from burdensome and growing regulations. We must help meet needs of current business and encourage entrepreneurship. Lowering taxes for individuals and businesses attracts new businesses.

Scott Japp We need to lower property taxes and stop fees so employees can afford to live in this State. We need affordable energy and utility prices. We need law enforcement to protect all of the public and a legal system that enforces the laws. The statement "build it and they will come" only works if you have educated and trained employees, a fair tax system, a just legal system, and a sufficient transportation and utilities system. Businesses choose locations that provide a great educational system for their employees and children, but avoid locations with a high proportion of welfare recipients.

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?

Lydia Brasch My LB 1093 was passed out of the Judiciary Committee and placed on consent calendar, then amended into LB 464 that changes provisions relating to the juvenile justice system, arraignment, court jurisdictions, services for juveniles and families and truancy. It was written to provide continuous services for family mediation where families are foremost engaged and empowered to do problem solving within the home and resources designed to create strong self-sufficient families.

Scott Japp Good laws should apply to all home situations. The State should not pass laws for special home situations.

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?

Lydia Brasch Following my sworn constitutional duties, decisions I make are based on research, all the facts are presented, and public input is collected through town hall meetings and open dialogue with constituents. I must vote with what I believe is the best public policy, protecting our individual freedoms, prevent undue burdens of over regulations, ensuring legislation does not create unsustainable fiscal obligations for the state and families we serve.

Scott Japp I have made my views quite clear. I do not foresee my personal views differing much from the majority of my constituents. I have no intention of changing my personal views that I present to the public and my constituents, and my constituents deserve no less. As Shakespeare once said, what a tangled web we weave once we start to deceive.

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.)

Lydia Brasch I do support this and introduced LR 42 that does this, encouraging congress to pass this and then for Nebraska to ratify this once passed, with 32 senators co-signing. It was one vote short to make it out of the Judiciary Committee.

Scott Japp I see nothing wrong with the amendment; however I do not believe we need this Amendment to the U.S. Constitution because we already have this right.

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?

Lydia Brasch What stands out is not supporting funding for illegal immigrants to receive prenatal funding. There were only 10 senators who are pro-life but believe our tax dollars should not fund anything for illegal immigrants.

Scott Japp I am an elected office holder today, where I am outnumbered 5 to 1. I always vote for what I believe is correct for my constituents. I do not sway to pressure just to conform to the majority of board members.

Constitution - 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?

Lydia Brasch This oath is to uphold and protect the laws of our state. Each law considered and passed has impact not only for those in my district but the entire state; this is a law that may have reach far into the future generations that follow us, they must be sound and not overburdening.

Scott Japp I will uphold the Constitution of the Land. I will notify any political group or organization if it appears that the government is not following the Constitution.

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

Lydia Brasch	My entire family has been very supportive and understanding of the commitment I have made and understands the importance of my work and impact it has to others.
Scott Japp	I have no family that would be affected by my decision to seek public office.

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?*

Lydia Brasch	Our personal principles are to be respected and we must also respect those of others. My counsel has been to speak with Former Governor Kay Orr, other senators who have served in the past or serve now, family and faith based organizations, my pastor, prayer.
Scott Japp	I will uphold my beliefs and principles to the highest standards. I do not need to change my principles just to get elected. I have mentors that I consult with when making difficult choices.

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?*

Lydia Brasch	I was one of only 2 senators endorsed by Nebraska Right to Life. I believe life starts at conception and we must protect the innocent unborn. The death penalty is just when malicious, heinous murder has taken place. This is right and just to do so according to scriptures.
Scott Japp	I am Pro-life, and life begins at conception. I would not use the death penalty. We cannot afford the cost to put people to death just to get revenge. Unfortunately, in the past, wrongly convicted people have later been found innocent. I have known people that have benefited from stem cell research. I now have learned that we may not have to use embryonic stem cells to do this type of research today. The State should not legalize physician-assisted suicide.

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?*

Lydia Brasch	Marriage is a religious institution; it is clearly written is to be between one man and one woman. We must not judge who someone chooses to love, or punish those that may be gay or trans-gender. Sexuality is something that should be personal and private, not public policy or sexual behaviors written into laws. I believe that the best situation for a child is to be raised by a mother and father, or family members in certain situations. Family situations may change due to circumstances, but children need every consideration taken to help them achieve a stable future.
Scott Japp	Marriage should be defined by government as a union between one man and one woman. Same-sex relationships should not carry the same rights and privileges as traditional marriage. You can consider me old-fashioned; I will have to be overruled by the United States Supreme Court. I believe discrimination against anyone is not right. However, I will not vote to give same-sex partners legal marriage licenses or benefits. There is no doubt that a child has a better chance of succeeding when raised by both a father and a mother.

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

Lydia Brasch	My vote is for conservative government and not going into further fiscal debt as a country. The Affordable Health Care Act was something that I could not support, this has resulted into more expense for families and greater debt for our country.
Scott Japp	I voted based on what is best for the economy of the country.

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

Lydia Brasch	With a perfect attendance record for 4 years, my service in my district has been a solid commitment to not raise taxes, this has been accomplished; and also work to lower taxes; I believe the next 4 years we will achieve this. Constituent services have been a priority where assisting families, businesses and individuals has resulted in many resolved situations for those I serve. I am available to speak and meet with constituents, their issues are important to me. My legacy these four years has been in the contacts made, meetings and community events attended. I serve on 4 committees and am vice-chair in 3 of these four. Farm Bureau has awarded me the Friend of Agriculture award this year as well.
Scott Japp	I do not beat around the bush. I am a straight shooter, and I tell it like it is.