



# Decoding the Ballot

What on earth does that person do?

## Lancaster County/Lincoln Ballot

### Federal

#### President of the United States

Head of the Executive Branch of the federal government.

The President makes appointments to federal agencies and departments that run federal programs, like the Department of Health & Human Services or the Department of Education. The president nominates people to the Supreme Court of the United States. The President is also in charge of national security, serving as Commander in Chief of the US Armed Forces. The President works with members of Congress to introduce laws. The President has the power to prevent a law going into effect that Congress has passed with a veto.

#### Member of the House of Representatives

Where the country's taxes and programs are born

Members of the United States House of Representatives make up one house of Congress. Your congressperson votes on laws including the federal budget and government programs, like food stamps and money for bridges and roads. What Congress does affects Nebraska. Changes to federal taxes must start in the House of Representatives.

### State

#### Member of the Legislature

They create the laws and make the rules for Nebraska.

The Nebraska Legislature makes laws for the state, creates and oversees many health care services, and decides how much money public schools (from kindergartens to college) get each year. The Legislature decides who pays taxes to Nebraska, how much people and businesses pay in taxes, and how the tax money gets spent.

### Nonpartisan

#### State Board of Education

Creates educational standards, and directs state dollars and federal programs for Nebraska's classrooms.

The State Board of Education provides elementary and high school education across Nebraska. This includes setting standards for what is taught in the classroom and ensuring consistent, high quality education. The Board of Education appoints the Commissioner for the Department of Education, and carries out federal education programs.

### Judicial Retention

Accountability for judges.

County, district, and state judges oversee all courts in Nebraska. Judges are initially appointed to the position of judgeship, but voters have the power to decide whether they stay there. A judicial retention on your ballot asks whether or not a judge should keep their job as judge.

### Natural Resources District

Conservation, sustainability, and keeping water out of your basement.

The NRD Board of Directors decides what amount will be collected from your property tax bill for the NRD and uses that money for projects in the community like building dams, drainage ditches, flood control, and recreation trails.

### Southeast Community College

They decide what is taught and how much you pay.

The Board of Governors manages Southeast Community College's staff and professors and develops its education programs to meet the community's needs. This includes setting tuition prices, setting the college's budget, and deciding what amount may be collected from your property tax bill.

### Information on both sides



### County Commissioner

They oversee county bridges, roads, health services, and law enforcement.

The Board of County Commissioners decides the amount of your property tax bill. Those property taxes pay for most county programs including emergency management, veteran services, weed control, infrastructure, and elections. Commissioners decide on the county budget and how much county officials are paid.

### Bond Election

Asking for *your* permission.

A local arm of the government, like a city council or school board, proposes creating a fund called a bond, which acts like a loan for a specific project. The bond is usually paid back through new or existing taxes. For example, a school board may hold a bond election to build new school buildings in your school district or make major upgrades to existing buildings.

### Special Issues Ticket

### Ballot Initiative

Laws proposed by voters.

A ballot initiative gives voters the power to propose state laws by collecting enough signatures from Nebraska voters to get their proposed law on the ballot. Review ballot on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov) on the Elections Page.

### Ballot Referendum

Voters determine whether existing laws should be kept.

A ballot referendum gives voters the power to propose state laws by collecting enough signatures from Nebraska voters to get their proposed law on the ballot. Review ballot on the Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov) on the Elections Page.

Information on  
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