



Chamber of Commerce

2012 Legislative Candidate Questionnaire – (Primary)

Name: **Larry Zimmerman**

Campaign Web Site: zimmermanforlegislature.com

Legislative District: 29

Occupation: **Retired**

Please provide any additional pertinent biographical information:

I have a diverse experience that I believe will aid me being a Senator for Legislative District 29 and the state of NE. I retired in 2010 after 25 years with the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation, as Vice President of Member Services/Field Services. I served prior to this as a Field Representative for the Missouri Farm Bureau for almost 10 years.

I have a BS degree in Biology and a Masters in Secondary School Administration. I taught high school biology for 8 years in Moberly MO.

I also have served as a school board member in Moberly MO for 8 years and 4 years as a trustee on the Moberly Jr. College Board.

I currently serve on the Lower Platte South Natural Resources Board (12 years) and on the People City Mission Board for 9 years. I go off both of these boards this year as I didn't file for the NRD board.

I have also volunteered at the Homeless Prevention site at 21st and N street and volunteered at Zeman elementary school In my grandson's 1st grade class.

I have been married for 45 years to my wife Mary, our two children graduated from the Lincoln Public School system.

I am also a proud veteran serving in the U.S. Army from 1968-1970.

- 1. Please list what you believe to be the top three issues for: a) Nebraska, and b) Your Legislative District.**

#1. NEBRASKA: High property taxes

DISTRICT: Control Government spending

#2. NEBRASKA: Jobs (We need new businesses in Nebraska and better paying jobs)

DISTRICT: Economic development (Many people have 3 or 4 part time jobs and no benefits). New businesses and better paying jobs are needed in Nebraska to prevent “brain drain” in this state.

#3. NEBRASKA: Education is important to all Nebraskan’s and is important to new industry that may locate in Nebraska. We need to fund them the best we can with the revenue available. We also need to evaluate how our tax dollars are being spent for education.

DISTRICT: Education/taxes

- 2. If elected, what is the #1 priority you would try to accomplish your first year?
One will be to introduce and support a bill to lower the corporate income tax rate. The other one will be to ask for a study of our taxing system. The Syracuse tax Was paid for by tax payer several years ago and some senators have told me that There are some good proposal contained in it. I also believe that NE has their own Talent that should be used to study our taxing system.**
- 3. Do you support protecting the Build Nebraska Act (enacted in 2011), which will direct a small portion of state sales tax revenues to road needs July, 1, 2013 through July 1, 2033? Among several other major projects, the Lincoln South Beltway is programmed to be built from proceeds under this law.**
X YES NO
Additional Comments: Roads/infrastructure are very important to commerce in this State and we either pay for it now or pay more later.
- 4. Do you support efforts to improve Nebraska’s competitive position for jobs and business investment by lowering taxes and restraining spending?**
X YES NO
Additional Comments: Our corporate income tax rate needs reduced to compete with our neighboring states of Kansas, Missouri and South Dakota, if economic development is going to succeed.
- 5. State senators have worked closely with Governor Heineman to reduce taxes and state spending. Their efforts have strengthened our economy, improved out tax rankings, and set a more disciplined course for prioritizing government spending. In the 2012 Session, lawmakers enacted modest tax relief. The Governor called these efforts a “down payment” and promised to continue to fight for substantial tax relief. If elected, would you support substantial tax relief as a priority next Session?**

YES NO

Additional Comments: As I indicated, we need to include all of the governors proposals For reducing taxes and I believe there are ways to do that with out harming County Government. I want to begin that discussion and do the research.

6. Please check the ONE characterization under each of the following categories that best represents your general view on the topic. **We also encourage you to provide additional comments that more specifically clarify and define your views.**

Taxes

I believe our tax burden is too high and I favor cutting taxes and prioritizing our spending needs.

I believe our tax burden is slightly excessive and favor slight tax cuts that maintain most of our current spending.

I believe our tax burden is about what it should be in order to maintain the state and local government programs and services desired by citizens. Therefore, I do not consider tax relief as a central theme of my campaign.

Additional Comments: Nebraska is still ranks 30th in taxes paid by our citizens and we Need to have real economic development in Lincoln and Nebraska to increase the Revenue through new businesses and the new jobs created by them.

State Spending

I don't believe we need to reduce the rate of growth of state spending. Program spending in areas such as state equalization aid to K-12 schools, funding for health and human services, and other government services need to be increased and our current projected trends are reasonable. Reduced state spending leads to local property tax increases.

I believe we need moderate reductions in the growth of state spending. Program spending in all areas can be reduced and through such shared efforts we must continue to reduce our state tax burden. Concerns over property taxes primarily should be addressed by local elected officials and administrators who make local spending decisions.

I believe we need fairly significant reductions in state spending. Program spending in many areas can be reduced and we must make government programs more accountable for their spending. This will require decisions about the size and scope of state government, but we must confront these issues if we want significant tax relief.

Additional Comments: I believe we relie too heavily on property taxes and we need to Think outside the box, increase our tax base and consolidate services. I also believe we Need to look at the formula for funding schools and see if that can be changed. Education is important to economic development however, I want to be sure Our schools are spending their tax dollars wisely.

Government Mergers/Consolidation

I support our current state and local government structure as the proper balance of state and local authority that reflects efficient state and local government.

I believe our current state and local government structure is outdated and I would support incentives for voluntary mergers and consolidations.

Additional Comments: I believe this can be done without harming are current system Of government. Nebraska now spends \$5,260 for every citizen in Nebraska to fund our State government. That is higher than our neighboring states of Missouri, Kansas and South Dakota.

Build Nebraska Act - Road Funding

I support the Build NE Act and would actively oppose efforts to repeal it.

I do not support the Build NE Act and believe we can't afford to direct sales tax funds to provide additional road funding.

Additional Comments: We probably need to look for additional sources of revenue to To fund our infrastructure in addition to the 1/4 cent sales tax.

7. Please tell us your creative ideas for encouraging strong job/investment growth in your district.

I don't pretend to have all the ideas for increasing economic development in NE However, we need to add additional incentives to the Governor's tax package Including reducing the Corporate income tax and being more transparent With our citizens so they know their tax dollars are being spent wisely.

I also want to research how we can eliminate the inheritance tax and still provide replacement revenue to the counties. Nebraska is on of only eight state that impose an inheritance tax, along with the estate tax. This would help small business in the state of Nebraska. When added to the federal estate tax (that was reinstated in 2011), Nebraska has the fifth highest tax in the nation, with 46.7 percent of inherited Wealth ultimately confiscated by government in the form of taxes. (Platte Institute Policy Study). This can't be done in one year but the debate needs to happen in the unicameral.

Thank you for completing our survey!

Must be returned to the Lincoln Chamber by Monday, April 30, 2012