

DECODING THE BALLOT: 2020 PRIMARY ELECTION

	Primary Election	May 12, 2020
<p>Welcome to <i>Decoding the Ballot!</i> This nonpartisan resource by Civic Nebraska helps explain what elected offices are on your ballot and what they actually do. State and local government has a real impact on our day-to-day lives, and voting in those races couldn't be more important.</p> <p>There are hundreds of different ballots used in each Nebraska election – they're all different based on where you live – so we've included some of the most common. Each entry includes a brief description of the office's responsibilities, term limits, and salary, if applicable.</p> <p>As always, if you have questions or need more information, you can contact us at 402.890.5291 or email me at john.cartier@civicnebraska.org.</p> <p>Thank you for being an informed participant in your democracy!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>  <p><i>John Cartier</i> Director of Voting Rights Civic Nebraska</p> 	Federal Ticket	State Ticket
	<p>For President of the United States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The president is the chief executive of the United States and commander in chief of the Armed Forces. He or she is responsible for federal administrative and judicial appointments and has the power to sign or veto legislation passed by Congress. ✓ The president serves a four-year term, renewable once, and is paid \$400,000 per year. He or she is elected alongside the vice president, who serves for the same term at a salary of \$235,000 per year. 	<p>For University of Nebraska Regent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Board of Regents is the governing body for the University of Nebraska system and has eight voting members. The board also includes four non-voting student regents, one from each system institution, that serve during their year as student president. ✓ Regents supervise the general operations of the university, as well as controls and directs all expenditures. Regents serve six-year terms.
	<p>For U.S. Senator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Senate is the upper chamber of the two houses of the U.S. Congress. Each state elects two senators. With the House of Representatives, the Senate creates and passes the country's laws. ✓ Additional Senate powers include advice and consent, meaning ratification of treaties and confirmation of Supreme Court justices, cabinet secretaries, ambassadors and other important federal seats. It also has the responsibility of conducting trials after the House begins impeachment procedures. Senators serve six-year terms and make \$174,000 a year. 	<p>For Public Service Commissioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Public Service Commission has five members. The commission regulates telecommunications carriers, natural gas jurisdictional utilities, major oil pipelines, railroad safety, household goods movers and passenger carriers, grain warehouses and dealers, construction of manufactured and modular homes and recreational vehicles, high-voltage electric transmission lines and private water company rates. Commissioners have six-year terms and are paid \$75,000 a year.
	<p>For U.S. House of Representatives District 1/2/3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The U.S. House of Representatives is composed of 435 representatives allocated to districts given to a state based on their population. Nebraska has 3 representatives. ✓ The House has the sole power to draft and introduce bills related to revenue and impeachment cases sent to the Senate. Members of the House serve two-year terms and are paid \$174,000 a year. 	County / Local Tickets
	State Ticket	<p>For County Commissioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ County Commissioners make up the boards that run the state's counties. They have authority over county budgets, administration, and appointments. County Boards are also responsible for the setting of tax levies and salaries of elected and appointed county officials. ✓ Most counties have a board of five to seven elected commissioners who typically serve four-year terms. County Commissioners are compensated about \$45,000 a year, depending on the county.
	<p>For State Legislature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Members of the country's only one-house, nonpartisan legislative body create laws and make the rules for Nebraskans under certain constitutional limitations. ✓ This body also oversees many health care services and decides how much money public schools receive. Members of the Legislature can serve two consecutive four-year terms and are paid \$12,000 a year. 	<p>For Community College Governor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Depending on where you live, you may have a Community College Board of Governors race. The board manages a community college's staff and professors. ✓ The board also develops its education programs based on its community's needs. This includes setting tuition prices, setting the college's budget and deciding the amount that may be collected from your property tax bill. Members of the Board of Governors serve four-year terms.
	<p>For State Board of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The State Board of Education sets education policy and ensures the State Department of Education functions within the framework developed by the Legislature and the board. ✓ The board is elected on a nonpartisan ballot, with one member from each district. Board members serve four-year terms. Board members are not paid, but are reimbursed for their expenses. 	

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	<p>For City Councilor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ City Councils have the power to adopt, amend, or repeal ordinances necessary to execute or make effective the provisions of a city’s charter. City Councils also have the power to adopt city budgets, make or confirm appointments, and provide for an independent audit or other necessary actions. Some large cities such as Lincoln and Omaha) have Home Rule Charters that give the City Council authority over regulating the health and welfare of their citizens. ✓ Some Councilors are elected by district; others are elected citywide. Most serve four-year terms and may be paid between \$24,000 to \$40,000 per year. Councilors are usually elected on a nonpartisan ballot. 	<p>For Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha Director</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha is a public utility that is customer-owned. The district provides public gas and drinking water to Omaha and the surrounding area. ✓ The Board of Directors sets rates and ensures water meets or exceeds all state and federal standards for drinking water. ✓ The district is governed by an elected board of seven directors who serve six-year terms.
	<p>For Board of Directors Public Power District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nebraska is the only state where electrical needs are provided by publicly owned utilities, which are largely known as public power districts. Depending on where you live, you may have a race to fill a seat on a board that serves one of the 166 community-owned utilities in Nebraska ✓ Those elected to serve on a board of directors for a public power district set the rates for residents and make decisions about investments in future energy sources. Directors serve six-year terms. 	<p>For Board Member Educational Service Unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Educational Service Units (ESUs) are political subdivisions that serve schools within their county-defined area by creating programs to support teachers and students. ✓ Core services provided by ESUs (in order of priority) are: staff development related to helping students achieve success who are impoverished and/or who come from diverse backgrounds; technology that helps assist distance education services; and providing instructional material services. ESUs may receive funds from local property taxes. Board members serve four-year terms.
	<p>For Board of Directors Natural Resources District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Nebraska Association of Resource Districts is governed by a 23-member Board of Directors, each representing a natural resource district. The NRD Board of Directors decides how much is collected from your property tax bill for the NRD and uses that money for projects such as building dams, drainage ditches, flood control, and recreation trails. ✓ NRDs are also responsible for preserving and protecting groundwater and other natural resources for future generations. Board members serve four-year terms. 	<p>Millard Public Schools Bond Election</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Millard Public Schools Board has a \$125 million bond issue on the May 2020 ballot. The bond is to update and maintain district schools and infrastructure. ✓ If approved, the bond will add roughly one (1) cent to the current tax levy in Millard. This would mean about \$20 extra each year on a house valued at \$200,000.
	<p>For Coordinating Council Learning Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Learning Community works in Douglas and Sarpy counties to help develop school programs that reverse the impact of poverty on learning. ✓ The Learning Community was formerly funded by a common levy but is now funded by property taxes. Council members serve four-year terms. 	<p>City of Omaha Street Transportation Bond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Omaha City Council approved a transportation bond issue on the election ballot that would raise \$200 million over the next five years. The bond is to fund a long-term pavement rehabilitation and reconstruction program. ✓ If approved, the bond will add to the current tax levy equivalent to an approximate increase of \$35 each year for a house valued at \$100,000.

