

Greater Omaha Chamber

2026 Nebraska Secretary of State Candidate Questionnaire

The Nebraska Secretary of State performs responsibilities that directly affect Nebraska's elections, business climate and the operation of state government. In addition to serving as the state's chief election officer, the office administers business registrations and commercial filings, maintains state rules and records, oversees several licensing functions and supports Nebraska's international relationships.

The Greater Omaha Chamber invites candidates for Nebraska Secretary of State to share their views on the following issues. **Please limit each response to approximately 150 words. Responses may be shared as submitted with Chamber members and the public.**

Candidate Name: Bob Krist

Party: America First Party

Occupation/Background:

-As a State Senator in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature represented the Tenth Legislative District, an area which encompassed portions of northwest Omaha, unincorporated areas of north-central Douglas County, and the City of Bennington. Appointed to the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature by Governor Dave Heineman in 2009, elected to a four-year term in 2010, and reelected in 2014. In the Legislature, elected to serve as the Chairman of the Executive Board. Committee assignments included the Judiciary Committee; the Education Committee; the Legislative Performance Audit Committee; the Legislature's Planning Committee; and the Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee of the Legislature. As a retired United States Air Force Lt Col, commanded two operational combat flying squadrons and served as Operations Officer in three additional squadrons; led multidisciplinary teams through complex missions including 100+ combat sorties in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Directed high-visibility Looking Glass EC-135 airborne command-post missions for Strategic Air Command and flew all models of the RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft; logged more than 17,000 flight hours across 30+ fixed- and rotary-wing platforms. Operational assignment locations included Keflavík, Iceland; Crete, Greece; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Al Kharij, Saudi Arabia; Shemya, Alaska; Aviano, Italy; Frankfurt, Germany; Budapest, Hungary; Diego Garcia, British Indian Occupied Territories; Mildenhall, United Kingdom; Istres, France; Okinawa, Japan; and Tokyo, Japan; Budapest, Hungary. Selected as Active-Duty Air

Force Advisor to the Governor of Nebraska and the Adjutant General; provided strategic counsel on military and state-level readiness issues. Graduated with honors from Creighton Preparatory School in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1975. Attended the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota, received a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology in 1979. Obtained a Master of Arts degree in business administration and human relations from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri in 1982. Inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame in 2014. Currently an Instructor at the Aviation Institute at the University of Nebraska.

I am combining 1 and 4.

1. Priorities for the Office

The Secretary of State oversees a wide range of responsibilities involving elections, business services, licensing, state records, rules and regulations and international relations. What would be your top priorities for the office during the next four years, and what changes, if any, would you seek to make in how the office serves Nebraskans and Nebraska businesses?

4. Business Services and Modernization

The Secretary of State is a primary point of contact between Nebraska government and businesses forming, expanding or conducting transactions in the state. The office is currently transitioning to a new online business filing system intended to expand electronic filing, simplify corrections and provide businesses greater access to filing information. What would your priorities be for implementing and continuing to improve these services? What measures would you use to evaluate whether the office is providing efficient service to Nebraska businesses?

-Some business services are too cumbersome. An example is the time it takes to form an LLC. The processes need streamlining in many cases. One of my first actions would be to review the new website, which is ready to release on 1 December thanks to the efforts of Secretary Evnen, consult with the Staff and tweak as necessary. In addition, many of the existing processes and filings need to be simplified and made available on line.

2. Election Administration and Public Confidence

The Secretary of State serves as Nebraska's chief election officer and works with election officials in all 93 counties to administer state election law, voter registration and election

systems. What principles should guide the Secretary of State in ensuring Nebraska elections are accurate, secure, accessible and administered consistently? How would you work to maintain public confidence in election results?

-We currently have the safest and most secure election processes in the US. However, it does not happen without constant attention to detail from our Commissioners to our County Clerks to the Poll Workers. My pledge is to continue and even expand the level of support and service from the SOS offices to NACO.

I am combining 3 and 7.

3. State and County Election Administration

Nebraska's elections are administered through a partnership between the Secretary of State and county election officials, creating a need for both statewide standards and effective local implementation. What steps would you take to improve coordination, training, technology and consistency among Nebraska's 93 county election offices while recognizing differences in their size and resources?

7. Initiative and Referendum Process

The Secretary of State has significant administrative responsibilities in Nebraska's initiative and referendum process, including receiving petitions and, with county election officials, determining the validity and sufficiency of petition signatures. What principles should guide the office's administration of ballot petitions? How would you promote a process that is consistent, timely, transparent and neutral regardless of the subject of a proposed measure?

-After the Primary, I was less than impressed with the voters' choices. I believe this position demands an understanding of the Legislative process and an adherence to the "Rule of Law" as prescribed by both the Nebraska and United States Constitutions. Let me give a brief example. When you have the background I bring to the position you understand history and respect the decisions previous administrations have made to guarantee every qualified resident of Nebraska can be heard. Secretary John Gale, who is endorsing me, took such action in 2005. On Secretary Gale's request, then State Senator Deb Fischer introduced a bill to allow County Election Commissioners to implement election procedures to allow mail in ballots. The law was passed, and as a result the participation in elections increased and costs decreased. In the 21 years since eleven Counties are almost exclusively mailing in their ballots and our elections are some of the safest in the country.

Several of my opponents have publicly questioned our election integrity and would like to limit mail-in and absentee ballots. In my opinion they do this out of ignorance of the history and a loyalty to false rhetoric. In speaking with the Nebraska Association of County Officials, I am convinced by the statistics and facts that Nebraska elections are the most secure and safest in the US. In addition, they must continue to be the most accessible to all legal voters. In short, with ten years' experience as a State Senator and my run for Governor I am the most qualified candidate for this office. As far as changes, I believe the overall process is not broken...so why fix it? There are a few exceptions. Our petition process needs to be tweaked on the front end, meaning the folks who are collecting signatures could be better trained and better supervised. On the backend our Legislature and Executive Branches need to move more expeditiously and with less personal bias. An example might be taking almost three years to act on a petition that had 72% favorability.

I am combining 5, 6 and 8.

5. Nebraska's Business Climate

Business registrations, corporate records, trade names, UCC filings and other commercial records administered by the Secretary of State are basic infrastructure for doing business in Nebraska. What role do you believe the Secretary of State should play in improving Nebraska's overall business climate? Are there administrative processes, fees, filing requirements or technologies you believe should be modernized or simplified?

6. Regulatory Transparency

The Secretary of State maintains the Nebraska Administrative Code and is responsible for filing, certifying and making state agency rules and regulations available to the public. What steps would you take to make Nebraska's regulatory system easier for businesses and the public to navigate? How should the office improve public access to current rules, proposed changes and other regulatory information?

8. International Trade and Economic Development

The Secretary of State serves as Nebraska's chief protocol officer and has a statutory role in developing international relationships and facilitating contacts that can advance commerce, educational exchange and other relationships between Nebraska and foreign nations. How would you use this role to support Nebraska's international trade and economic development efforts? How should the office coordinate with the Governor, Department of Economic Development, Department of Agriculture and local economic development organizations?

-I believe these are three of the most important issues facing the SOS office as well as the economy of Nebraska. Attracting and keeping business in Nebraska should be a major focus of the SOS and it will come back into focus under my watch. Less bureaucracy, more modernization and reasonable fee structures are paramount. This is especially true when it comes to attracting international businesses. I have extensive Geopolitical experience working internationally. Those skills translate to broader opportunities for Nebraska.

As it relates to coordination with the Governor and state agencies that will depend on the Governor and the most knowledgeable experts on the topics of the targeted business initiatives. But to be blunt, I believe the office of SOS should be apolitical always concerned with what is best for the citizens of Nebraska.

As far as transparency is concerned, as it applies to certifying regulations and rules it comes down to education and publication. The best way to handle both is through an easily navigable website that is kept up to date and accurate. As I mentioned earlier, I will make it a priority to evaluate the website after it is published on 1 December and change or tweak as my staff and I see necessary.

9. Customer Service and Government Efficiency

Businesses interact with the Secretary of State for corporate filings, UCC records, notary services, licensing and other functions. What standards should the office establish for processing times, online availability, customer service and the cost of accessing state services? How would you identify processes that could be simplified or moved online without sacrificing security or accuracy?

-There are acceptable processing times, and then there are efficiencies that can be identified to minimize time and money. These efficiencies are not always obvious, but most often are identifiable by looking for answers “out of the box”. That is, the way it is being done or has been done may not be the only way.

In my experience that is most often facilitated by enlisting the assessment by a second or even a third set of eyes or enlisting the assistance of carefully monitored AI.

10. Accountability and Measures of Success

If elected, what specific outcomes would you use at the end of your term to determine whether the Secretary of State's office had become more effective? What performance

measures should the public be able to use to evaluate the office's administration of elections, business services and its other responsibilities?

-From day one, I will develop a series of Continuity Documents detailing the tasks/roles of the many diverse responsibilities of the SOS office. The money savings, processing times, manpower savings and restructuring will be documented measured and weighed.

The results will speak for themselves!