

Responses from Christopher N. Geary, candidate for Senator of District 3

2008 Legislature

1. What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish?

I'm running for State Senator because I want to play a part in shaping the future of Nebraska. As State Senator of District 3, I intend to represent the concerns of the people in my district and support policies that benefit *all* Nebraskans.

2. What do you see as your most valuable credential for this position? Please include biographical information you consider important for voters to know.

My most important credential is self-discipline. I am a self-made businessman who started out with nothing and within the first four years began building a network of independently operated martial arts schools (Christopher N. Geary's Shaolin Kempo Karate) in Omaha and the surrounding area. As further evidence of this credential, I am the youngest person in the U.S. (and second youngest in the world) to achieve the rank of 10th Degree Black Belt, the highest rank achievable in the martial arts. As a martial artist, I have always encouraged my students to live up to their fullest potential. As a State Senator, I intend to bring the same type of inspirational spirit to the Unicameral.

3. What will/would be the topic of your priority bill in the Legislature?

Based on my conversations with people throughout District 3, property taxes are an area of major concern. Accordingly, I would prioritize measures that would restore fairness to the system of determining property taxes so that some homeowners are not overburdened in comparison with residents of other areas.

4. Just as the state doesn't like unfunded mandates from the federal government, the counties don't like even partially-funded mandates from the state. What action do you propose to prevent that problem in the future?

I believe we need to listen to voters and put some effort into building consensus before passing legislation. Pushing bills through the system will not accomplish anything unless the majority of the people who will be affected by the legislation agree with its purposes.

5. What legislation would you support/propose to deal with immigrants, legal and illegal?

Legal immigrants should be treated the same as anyone else, but illegal immigrants have broken the law. The main reason most people enter this country illegally is to earn money to send to relatives back home, and if they could not earn money they would not be here. That's why I believe we need stricter penalties, stiffer fines, and better enforcement against companies that hire undocumented workers. I oppose so-called "guest worker" programs because they create a supply of cheap labor that undermines the wages of U.S. workers. I oppose allowing undocumented aliens to get driver's licenses, because I believe that it would send a message that

it is okay to break the law. Nebraska is considering the passage of laws that would bar illegal aliens from receiving social services. The logic is that they do not pay for these citizen-funded programs and therefore should not receive benefits, and I agree.

6. When drafting legislation, what steps will you take to factor in the differences between urban and rural needs?

Throughout my campaign I have worked hard to learn about the concerns of the people in my district. My first priority will be to represent their interests in the legislature, but I also intend to listen and learn from residents of rural parts of Nebraska. We need to find common ground so we can work together to address the challenges that confront us now and in the future.

7. What measures should be taken to increase state revenue and/or what measures should be taken to decrease state spending? Is there a tax-cut program you support?

I believe we need to encourage companies to move to Nebraska in order to create additional job opportunities and support economic growth. We need to look carefully at expenditures in order to avoid wasting taxpayers' money. With regard to tax cuts, I believe property taxes are too high for many of the homeowners in my district. Home values are going down in some areas, and property taxes should reflect this reality.

8. Discuss what you see as the basic state constitutional responsibilities of the Legislature with respect to education.

We need to ensure a quality education for all of Nebraska's students by making sure that teachers are compensated fairly and schools receive the resources they need. We also need to hold schools, teachers, and parents accountable for providing the next generation with the knowledge they will need in order to reach their full potential.

9. What can the Legislature do to promote energy efficiency and environmentally friendly practices?

We can institute tax incentives and other policies that encourage eco-friendly choices by individuals and businesses. The decisions we make today will have lasting effects on the future well-being of our state and the rest of the nation.

10. Do you personally oppose or support expanded gambling in Nebraska that would include video slot machines and/or casinos?

Many residents of Omaha cross the state line on a regular basis to visit the casinos in Council Bluffs because gambling is legal in Iowa. This siphons off funds that could be used in Nebraska to support school improvement, environmental protection, and other purposes. With careful regulation, gambling could be legalized in Nebraska without causing harm to our state.

11. Should "sexual orientation" be a consideration in determining minority status with respect to employment, housing, "domestic partner," insurance, etc.?

Sexual behavior between consenting adults is a private matter that should not be used as an excuse for discrimination in the workplace. If a person can carry out the requirements of the job, sexual orientation is none of the employer's business. I believe companies should have the right to establish their own policies with regard to providing health insurance and other benefits for domestic partners.

12. What is your position on human cloning, the use of fetal tissue for research, and/or embryonic stem cell research?

I am not an expert in this area, but I disagree with the creation of human life solely to obtain tissue for medical purposes. Research involving adult stem cells should be explored further because it does not pose the same ethical questions as usage of embryonic stem cells and other fetal tissue.

13. 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?

As a matter of policy, I do not accept financial contributions from lobbyists or special interest groups. I intend to listen to my constituents and represent their interests in Lincoln, not the agenda of a political party or interest group.

These last few questions we ask regardless of what office is being sought. You may not think these relate to your office, but we believe personal principles push political policies so that's why we ask these:

14. How do you picture holding this elected position will affect your family?

At this point in my life I am single, which gives me more time and energy to devote to public office than I would have as a husband and father. (I do hope to have a family someday, however.)

15. Do you oppose or support a Parental Rights Amendment to the Federal Constitution?

I am leery of amendments that could potentially tie up our courts in extended legal battles, as a Parental Rights Amendment might do. However, I support parents' rights to home school their children, and I do not oppose spanking unless it is used as an excuse for child abuse.

16. What is your position on the abortion issue and what experiences or education led you to hold that position?

My position is pro-life because I believe adoption is a more responsible choice than abortion when a couple is faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

17. Would you be willing to tell us for whom you plan to vote for President?

As a former member of the U.S. Marine Corps, I intend to vote for John McCain because he is the only presidential candidate who has performed military service. The U.S. President serves as Commander in Chief of the military, and I believe the best person for that role is someone who has actually performed military service.

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