

Brinker Harding (NE-02) Research Report

Significant Findings

Harding Supported The One Big Beautiful Bill, Which Would Kick More Than 15,000 People Off Their Health Insurance In NE-02 And Threaten Food Assistance For More Than 23,300 Households In The District

- ✓ July 2025: Harding supported the One Big Beautiful Bill, saying “Two of my campaign pillars are grow America and secure America. The One Big Beautiful Bill does just that.”
- ✓ Harding: “If you are able bodied and you're able to work and you're a 28-year-old, male. Why should you get Medicaid? Get to work.”
- ✓ The One Big Beautiful Bill enacted the largest cuts to Medicaid in history, slashing local hospital revenue, and was estimated to kick more than 15,000 people in NE-02 off their health insurance.
- ✓ The One Big Beautiful Bill let ACA tax credits expire, driving up health care costs for more than 39,000 individuals in NE-02 on marketplace plans.
- ✓ The One Big Beautiful Bill risked food assistance for more than 23,000 households in NE-02.
- ✓ The One Big Beautiful Bill’s biggest tax cuts benefited the wealthiest, giving them tax cuts three times greater than for working Americans, and would add \$3.4 trillion to the national debt over the next decade.

As A Member Of The Omaha Civilian Pension Board, Harding Managed An “Underfunded” And “Distressed” Omaha Civilian Pension That Was Reported To Have One Of The Lowest Returns On Investment Of Any Public Pension Nationwide

- ✓ 2017-Present: Harding was a member of the Omaha Civilian Pension Board of Trustees which oversaw and managed the assets of the City of Omaha Employees Retirement System.
- ✓ FY2020-FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension was underfunded and “distressed,” with funded status never surpassing 60%.
 - ✓ The Omaha Civilian Pension was only 51.13% funded and had a net pension liability of over \$255 million in fiscal year 2024.
- ✓ 2022: The Nebraska State Legislature Retirement Systems Committee reported that the Omaha Civilian Pension had the lowest funding status of any of the public pensions in Nebraska, and that the city had failed to pay millions of dollars in its annual required contributions to the pension.
- ✓ 2022: The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee report found that between 2017 and 2021 the City of Omaha had paid \$7.5 million less than its full annual required contributions into the Omaha Civilian Pension.

- ✓ 2022: The Republican Chair of the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee questioned how the Omaha Civilian Pension was being managed, calling its underfunding “a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha.”
- ✓ In 2024 and 2025, the city of Omaha received a lower bond ratings due in part to the Omaha Civilian Pension being underfunded.
- ✓ 2024-2025: Moody’s and S & P Global cited the city’s long-term liabilities, including the underfunded civilian pension, as a reason why Omaha’s bond rating was not higher.
- ✓ Being able to attain a higher bond rating would have saved money for the city of Omaha and its taxpayers.
- ✓ According to the Reason Foundation, the Omaha Civilian Pension had one of the lowest returns on investment of any public pension in the country in 2024.
- ✓ 2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension was one of just six public pensions in the country with a return on investments lower than 6%.

Harding Was An Extremist Who Supported Banning Abortion With No Exceptions For Rape And Incest, And Praised Politicians Who Sought To Repeal The Affordable Care Act And Make Deep Cuts To Social Security And Medicare

- ✓ 2021: Harding supported banning abortion with no exceptions for rape or incest.
- ✓ Harding touted the endorsement of Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer, who supported repealing the ACA, and backed extreme reforms to senior benefits, including means-testing and raising the retirement age.
- ✓ Harding praised Senator Tim Scott, who proposed raising the retirement age and voted for billions in Medicare cuts, as “one [of] our country’s finest leaders.”

Harding Was Bad For Public Safety, Voting Against Hiring Additional First Responders In Omaha And Against Common Sense Legislation That Could Get Guns Out Of The Hands Of Juveniles

- ✓ Harding voted to uphold the veto of a budget resolution to add 18 firefighters to Omaha’s Fire Department against the wishes of the Omaha Professional Firefighters Union.
- ✓ Harding voted against banning ghost gun components, which allowed people to buy kits to assemble firearms at home.
- ✓ Harding voted against supporting an order to prohibit the carry of firearms on city-owned property including government buildings, parks, and public spaces, claiming it would have no effect.

Harding Was A Longtime Political Insider Who Started His First Job In Establishment Politics In 1994, And In City Hall Was Accused Of “Abus[ing]... City Resources For [His] Own Political Purposes”

- ✓ 1994-2025: Harding began his career in Nebraska politics and Omaha City Government more than 30 years ago.

- ✓ 1996: As a city official, Harding received the largest salary increase of any official in the Omaha Mayoral Office and made nearly triple Nebraska’s yearly median salary.
- ✓ In 1997, Harding was accused of “abus[ing]... city resources” for his “own political purposes” when he allegedly used his position as Omaha’s acting planning director to target a mayoral candidate running against his boss, Mayor Hal Daub.

Harding Defended A Multi-Million Dollar City Contractor After They Were Found To Be Replacing Unionizing Employees With Undocumented Workers, Faced Investigations By The National Labor Relations Board And The Department Of Justice, And Faced More Than \$14,000 In OSHA Fines For Multiple Violations

- ✓ 1995-1997: Omaha garbage contractor Deffenbaugh industries faced multiple scandals including hiring undocumented workers to replace unionizing employees, investigations by the National Labor Relations Board and the Department of Justice, and fines by OSHA for multiple violations.
- ✓ 1995: The city of Omaha entered a seven-year, \$60 million contract with garbage collection company Deffenbaugh Industries.
- ✓ 1996: Deffenbaugh Industries’ Omaha facility was raided by federal immigration agents after they employed more than 70 undocumented workers to replace unionizing employees.
- ✓ 1997: OSHA fined Deffenbaugh Industries more than \$14,000 for five alleged violations, including forbidding workers to take breaks.
- ✓ 1997: The National Labor Relations Board found Deffenbaugh had violated the National Labor Relations Act by refusing to bargain with its union, and Deffenbaugh was reportedly under federal investigation by the U.S. Justice Department.
- ✓ 1997: Harding referred to Deffenbaugh as “great service providers” after the multiple scandals and defended the administration’s overseeing of city contracts.

Background

- **FULL LEGAL NAME:** David Brinker Harding (65 years old)
- **EDUCATION:** University of Nebraska at Omaha, College of Business Administration (years unknown); B.A., University of Kansas (1980-1984); Westside High School (1979); Deerfield Academy (1976-1979)
- **PROFESSIONAL:** Vice President, Colliers International (2000-present); Campaign Manager, Daub for Mayor (2008-2009); Chief of Staff and Director of Economic Development, Omaha Mayor’s Office (1995-2000); Finance Director, Daub for Mayor (1994); Accounts Manager, Data Processor International (Before 1994)
- **POLITICAL:** Omaha City Council Member, District 6 (2017-present)
- **COMMITTEES:** Omaha Douglas Building Commission (2018-present), Omaha Civilian Pension Board (2017-Present)
- **NON-PROFIT:** N/A
- **AWARDS:** N/A
- **ORGANIZATIONS:** Community Leaders Of America (2023-2024)
- **LICENSES:** Iowa Real Estate Salesperson License (active, last renewed 12/04/25, expires 12/31/28)

Harding Supported The One Big Beautiful Bill, Which Would Kick More Than 15,000 People Off Their Health Insurance In NE-02 And Threaten Food Assistance For More Than 23,000 Households In The District

July 2025: Harding Supported The One Big Beautiful Bill

July 2025: Harding: “Two Of My Campaign Pillars Are Grow America And Secure America. The One Big Beautiful Bill Does Just That.” “Two of my campaign pillars are Grow America and Secure America. The One Big Beautiful Bill does just that—cutting taxes for working families and making our border & homeland more secure.” [Brinker Harding, Twitter, [7/4/25](#)]



Harding In 2025: “Why Should You Get Medicaid? Get To Work”

Harding: “If You Are Able-Bodied And You're Able To Work And You're A 28-Year-Old, Male. Why Should You Get Medicaid? Get To Work.” **HARDING:** “Mike Flood, you hit it. You were spot on. You knew the right question to ask to get that kind of a response. And it's amazing to me that people actually believe that if you are able bodied and you're able to work and you're a 28-year-old, male. Why should you get Medicaid? Get to work.” [Brinker Harding, Twitter, 0:44, [9/1/25](#)] (VIDEO)

The One Big Beautiful Bill Enacted The Largest Cuts To Medicaid In History, Slashing Local Hospital Revenue, And Would Kick More Than 15,000 People In NE-02 Off Their Health Insurance

The One Big Beautiful Bill Made The Largest Cuts To Medicaid In The Program's History

The Hill: **Republicans Passed “The Largest Cuts To Medicaid Since The Program Began In The 1960s.”** “Senate Republicans on Tuesday passed the largest cuts to Medicaid since the program began in the 1960s, a move that would erode the social safety net and cause a spike in the number of uninsured Americans over the next decade. The tax and spending bill is projected to cost more than \$3 trillion during that time, but it would be partially paid for with about \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid. Almost 12 million lower-income Americans would lose their health insurance by 2034, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).” [The Hill, [7/1/25](#)]

- **The Hill: The Republicans’ Reconciliation Bill Made About \$1 Trillion In Cuts To Medicaid.** “Senate Republicans on Tuesday passed the largest cuts to Medicaid since the program began in the 1960s, a move that would erode the social safety net and cause a spike in the number of uninsured Americans over the next decade. The tax and spending bill is projected to cost more than \$3 trillion during that time, but it would be partially paid for with about \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid. Almost 12 million lower-income Americans would lose their health insurance by 2034, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).” [The Hill, [7/1/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Take Health Insurance Away From More Than 14 Million People

KFF: “CBO Estimates Show That The Number Of Uninsured People Will Increase By More Than 14 Million In 2034.” [KFF, [8/20/25](#)]

HEADLINE: “Congress Officially Passes Trump’s Bill To Kick Millions Off Medicaid.” [Rolling Stone, [7/3/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Was Estimated To Kick More Than 15,000 People In NE-02 Off Their Health Insurance

September 2025: The Joint Economic Committee Minority Estimated More Than 15,000 People In Nebraska’s 2nd Congressional District Would Lose Health Insurance By 2034 Due To Congressional Republicans’ Cuts To Medicaid And The ACA. “According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO)’s most recent analysis, President Trump and Congressional Republicans’ cuts to Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would result in 16 million people losing their health insurance by 2034. Using CBO’s analysis released June 4 and other research, the Joint Economic Committee – Minority calculated new estimates of the number of people who would lose health insurance.” [Joint Economic Committee Minority, Press Release, [September 2025](#)]

NE-02: Health Insurance Losses From Cuts To Medicaid And The Affordable Care Act Under The One Big Beautiful Bill		
Est. Number of People Losing Affordable Care Act Coverage	Est. Number of People Losing Medicaid Coverage	Est. Total Number of People Losing Insurance
7,600	8,157	15,757

[Joint Economic Committee Minority, Press Release, [September 2025](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Was Projected To Cut More Than \$47 Million In Revenue To Hospitals In NE-02

Under The One Big Beautiful Bill, Hospitals In NE-02 Were Projected To Lose \$47,230,355 As A Result Of Medicaid Cuts. [Third Way, GOP Medicaid Cuts Will Decimate Hospitals Nationwide, [7/8/25](#)]

Projected Cuts To NE-02 Hospital Revenue From Medicaid Cuts In The One Big Beautiful Bill			
Hospital	City	Zip Code	Projected Cut To Hospital Revenue
The Nebraska Medical Center	Omaha	68198	\$20,359,014
Chi Health Creighton University Berg	Omaha	68124	\$12,043,682
Nebraska Methodist Hospital	Omaha	68114	\$6,618,342
Chi Health Immanuel	Omaha	68122	\$4,930,814
Chi Health Lakeside	Omaha	68130	\$2,094,859
Nebraska Orthopaedic Hospital LLC	Omaha	68144	\$608,276
Nebraska Spine Hospital	Omaha	68122	\$236,027
Saunders County Health Services	Wahoo	68066	\$216,075

Midwest Surgical Hospital	Omaha	68114	\$123,266
Total:			\$47,230,355

[Third Way, GOP Medicaid Cuts Will Decimate Hospitals Nationwide, [7/8/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Let ACA Tax Credits Expire, Driving Up Health Care Costs For More Than 39,000 Individuals In NE-02 On Marketplace Plans

The One Big Beautiful Bill And Trump’s Tariffs Made Health Care More Expensive For More Than 39,000 NE-02 Residents That Got Coverage From ACA Marketplace Plans

2025: More Than 136,000 Individuals In Nebraska Were Enrolled In ACA Marketplace Plans. [KFF, [4/2/25](#)]

Number Of Nebraska Residents Enrolled In ACA Marketplace Plans In 2025	
State	ACA Marketplace Enrollees
Nebraska	136,684

[KFF, [4/2/25](#)]

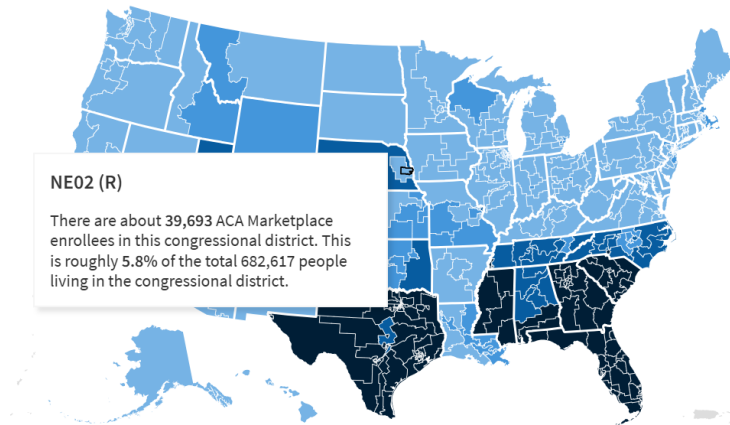
2025: More Than 39,000 Individuals In NE-02 Were Enrolled In ACA Marketplace Plans. [KFF, [10/3/25](#)]

Number Of NE-02 Residents Enrolled In ACA Marketplace Plans In 2025	
District	ACA Marketplace Enrollees
NE-02	39,693

[KFF, [10/3/25](#)]

Share of Population That is Enrolled in the Affordable Care Act Marketplaces in 2025 by Congressional District, 119th Congress

■ < 6% ■ 6%–8% ■ 8%–10% ■ ≥ 10%



Note: Sum of estimated plan selections do not sum up to national total due to rounding. Congressional district level enrollment was estimated by taking county-level enrollment and mapping it to the Congressional district level, apportioning enrollment when counties are in multiple congressional districts. Party listed is the party of the House member for the congressional district and is as of October 3, 2025.

Source: KFF analysis of [Missouri Census Data Center GeoCorr 2022 tool](#), [CMS state and county Open Enrollment Period public use files](#), and state enrollment data • [Get the data](#) • [Download PNG](#)

KFF Health System Tracker: Insurers That Participated In The ACA Marketplaces Raised Premiums On Average By 20% In 2026. “For 2026, across 312 insurers participating in the ACA Marketplaces from the 50 states and the District of Columbia, this analysis shows a median proposed premium increase of 18%, which is about 11 percentage points higher than last year. This is the largest rate change insurers have requested since 2018, the last time that policy uncertainty contributed to sharp premium increases. On average, ACA Marketplace insurers are raising premiums by about 20% in 2026. Based on a more detailed analysis of available documents from insurers in 19 states and the District of Columbia, like in prior years, growth in health care prices stood out as a key factor driving costs in 2026. Insurers cite increasing cost and utilization of high-priced drugs as well as general market factors, such as increasing labor costs and inflation, as contributing to premium increases.” [Health System Tracker, [8/6/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Did Not Extend Enhanced Premium Tax Credits For ACA Marketplace Plans. “The OBBBA did not extend enhanced premium tax credits for ACA marketplace plans. As a result, when open enrollment begins on November 1, 2025, 20 million marketplace enrollees will see their premium costs spike.” [Center for American Progress, [7/29/25](#)]

- **The Majority Of Insurers Took Into Account The Potential Expiration Of Enhanced Premium Tax Credits For Their Rate Increases.** “In addition to rising healthcare costs, the majority of insurers are also taking into account the potential expiration of enhanced premium tax credits in their premium rate increases for the next year. The expiration of enhanced tax credits will lead to out-of-pocket premiums for ACA marketplace enrollees increasing by an average of more than 75%, with insurers expecting healthier enrollees to drop coverage. That, in turn, increases underlying premiums. Other federal policy changes, like the implementation of tariffs and the ACA Marketplace Integrity and Affordability rule were also discussed, though to a lesser extent.” [Health System Tracker, [8/6/25](#)]
- **The Majority Of Insurers Assumed Enhanced Tax Credits Would Expire At The End Of 2025, Which Caused Them To Raise Their Rates By An Average Of 4%.** “Uncertainty over federal policy changes has forced insurers to make some assumptions when developing their rates for 2026. Commonly mentioned by insurers is the impact of the expiration of enhanced premium tax credits, which are scheduled to sunset at the end of 2025, unless extended by Congress. The majority of insurers have assumed that enhanced tax credits will expire at the end of this year, driving rates an average of 4 percentage points higher than they otherwise would be. These increased rates are due to insurers anticipating that some healthier members will leave the ACA Marketplaces when their subsidies decrease, creating an enrollee base that is less healthy and more expensive on average.” [Health System Tracker, [8/6/25](#)]
- **The Expiration Of Enhanced Tax Credits Would Lead To Out-Of-Pocket Premiums For ACA Marketplace Enrollees Increasing By An Average Of Over 75%.** “In addition to rising healthcare costs, the majority of insurers are also taking into account the potential expiration of enhanced premium tax credits in their premium rate increases for the next year. The expiration of enhanced tax credits will lead to out-of-pocket premiums for ACA marketplace enrollees increasing by an average of more than 75%, with insurers expecting healthier enrollees to drop coverage. That, in turn, increases underlying premiums. Other federal policy changes, like the implementation of tariffs and the ACA Marketplace Integrity and Affordability rule were also discussed, though to a lesser extent.” [Health System Tracker, [8/6/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Enacted The Largest SNAP Cuts In History, Threatening Food Assistance For More Than 23,000 Households In NE-02

Center For American Progress: The One Big Beautiful Bill Enacted The Largest SNAP Cut In The Program’s History

Center For American Progress: “The Senate Has Released Its Version Of The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Which Would Enact The Largest Cut To The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) In The

Program’s History According To Center For American Progress Estimates. “The Senate has released its version of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which would enact the largest cut to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the program’s history according to Center for American Progress estimates. Despite the proposal cutting less than the House-passed version’s nearly \$300 billion in cuts, it is even more extreme than the House version in some key aspects. Moreover, this legislation comes at a time when food insecurity is rising across all 50 states, reaching levels not seen since 2014.” [Center for American Progress, [6/26/25](#)]

- **Axios: “The Bill Would Reduce Nutrition Funding, Which Includes SNAP, By Around \$186 Billion Between 2025 And 2034.”** “By the numbers: The bill would reduce nutrition funding, which includes SNAP, by around \$186 billion between 2025 and 2034. While analyst's projections have fluctuated as the legislation's provisions are tweaked, analysts have indicated millions of people could be cut from SNAP under the work requirement provisions.” [Axios, [7/3/25](#)]
- **HEADLINE: “House Reconciliation Bill Proposes Deepest SNAP Cut In History, Would Take Food Assistance Away From Millions of Low-Income Families.”** [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [5/28/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Cut SNAP By Around \$186 Billion. President Trump's massive tax and spending bill, which is advancing through the House after surviving its Republican push through the Senate, would slash food benefits for thousands. The big picture: It would mark a historic cut to the social safety net that Republicans claim weeds out waste, fraud and abuse — but experts say the restructuring of assistance programs could leave more people hungry and uninsured. [...] By the numbers: The bill would reduce nutrition funding, which includes SNAP, by around \$186 billion between 2025 and 2034. [Axios, [7/3/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Risked Food Assistance For More Than 23,000 Households In NE-02

According To The U.S. Department Of Agriculture, More Than 23,000 Households Participated In Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) In NE-02. [USDA, accessed [7/15/25](#)]

Who Receives SNAP?

SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budgets of low-income families so they can purchase healthy food.

In NE District 2, SNAP serves...

23,383

HOUSEHOLDS

Explore below to learn about SNAP participants in NE District 2.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Gave Billions In Tax Breaks To The Ultra-Wealthy At The Expense Of Working Families

Institute On Taxation And Economic Policy: The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Give The Richest 1% Of Americans \$117 Billion In Net Tax Cuts In 2026

Institute On Taxation And Economic Policy: The House-Passed Reconciliation Bill Would Give The Richest 1% Of Americans \$117 Billion In Net Tax Cuts In 2026. “The House of Representatives today narrowly passed a massive tax and spending reconciliation bill that now heads to President Trump’s desk. Please see below for a statement from ITEP and our latest updated analysis of how the bill’s tax provisions will affect families at different income levels nationally and in every state. [...] The richest 1 percent of Americans would receive a total of \$117 billion in net tax cuts in 2026. The middle 20 percent of taxpayers on the income scale, a group that has 20 times the number of taxpayers as the richest 1 percent, would receive less than half that much, \$53 billion in net tax cuts that year.” [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [7/3/24](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill's Biggest Tax Cuts Benefited The Wealthiest Giving Them Tax Cuts Three Times Greater Than For Working Americans

The One Big Beautiful Bill's Biggest Tax Cuts Benefited The Wealthiest. “The One Big Beautiful Bill includes the largest tax cuts in U.S. history. Whether it’s actually ‘beautiful’ is in the eye of the beholder. At every income level taxes should subsidize. That’s a big selling point from President Donald Trump and fellow Republicans who pushed the law through Congress with no Democratic support. It will benefit everyone. But the biggest cuts go to the wealthiest taxpayers – the ones who pay the lion’s share of taxes. For most families the savings will be miniscule in comparison, in raw dollars and as a share of income. And millions will lose subsidized health insurance and other benefits. Critics see a plan that widens income inequality and, worse, offsets tax cuts for the wealthy with draconian spending cuts that hit lower-income households.” [Cronkite News, [7/16/25](#)]

The House-Passed Republican Reconciliation Bill Extended The Tax Cuts And Jobs Act Which Skewed In Favor Of The Wealthy By Providing Them Tax Cuts That Were Three Times Greater Than For Working Americans. “The tax provisions of the House Republican reconciliation bill double down on the failures of the 2017 tax law, which was skewed in favor of the richest people in the country, further eroded the nation’s revenue base, and didn’t produce the promised economic gains for working people.[1] Instead of changing course and prioritizing people with low and moderate incomes as House Republicans’ rhetoric about supporting hard-pressed working families would suggest, the House Republican tax bill only offers more of the same. The bill is heavily skewed to the wealthy: Under the bill, the top 1 percent of people would receive tax cuts three times the size of those for people with incomes in the bottom 60 percent, measured as a share of after-tax income. (See Figure 1.) The top 0.6 percent of people — the 1.2 million people with annual incomes above \$1 million — would receive more total tax cuts than the 127 million people with incomes below \$100,000. [...] The bill extends and expands the 2017 tax law’s increase in the estate tax exemption, boosting the cut in estate taxes for the 1 in 1,000 wealthiest estates to \$6.3 million.[3] Next year a couple could pass on an estate worth up to \$30 million tax free, \$1.7 million more than under a simple extension of the 2017 law.” [CBPP, [5/22/25](#)]

CBS: “Like Penn Wharton, Other Researchers Have Said The Republican Bill Is Likely To Benefit Wealthy Americans At The Expense Of People Lower Down The Ladder.” “Like Penn Wharton, other researchers have said the Republican bill is likely to benefit wealthy Americans at the expense of people lower down the ladder. The measure would likely reduce the financial resources available to the lowest-earning 10% of U.S. households by \$1,600 per year, or almost 4% of their annual income, according to a report published earlier this month by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. White House officials have previously questioned the CBO's scoring of the bill. But the highest-earning 10% of households would see a gain of \$12,000 per year in resources, while middle-income households would see a gain of \$500 to \$1,000, the CBO projected. Its analysis is based on the bill's tax breaks, as well as reductions for federal programs and reductions in state funds for safety net programs such as Medicaid and food stamps. In considering the impact of higher U.S. debt on future generations, the cost would come in the form of lower wages and higher costs, such as more expensive mortgages, Smetters said.” [CBS News, [6/26/25](#)]

The Hill: “The Republicans’ ‘Big, Beautiful Bill’ Will Make The Poorest Americans Even Poorer, While Padding The Wallets Of The Highest Earners The Most, According To An Analysis Released Monday By Congress’s Budget Arm.” “The Republicans’ ‘big, beautiful bill’ will make the poorest Americans even poorer, while padding the wallets of the highest earners the most, according to an analysis released Monday by Congress’s budget arm. The assessment, conducted by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) at the request of top Democrats, found that the top 10 percent of earners in the country will see an average boost of \$13,600 per year over the next decade as a direct result of provisions in the law, while the bottom 10 percent will see an average annual decrease of \$1,200. The report challenges the arguments made by President Trump and other Republicans that the massive domestic policy package would benefit workers at all levels of wealth and income. And it’s given fuel to the attacks from Democrats that the legislation was, all along, designed to help the wealthiest people at the expense of the working poor.” [The Hill, [8/11/25](#)]

- **HEADLINE: “Budget Office Says GOP’s ‘Big, Beautiful Bill’ Will Make Rich Richer, Poor Poorer.”**
[Hill, [8/11/25](#)]

The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Add \$3.4 Trillion To The National Debt

The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Add \$3.4 Trillion To The National Debt Over The Next Decade

The One Big Beautiful Bill Would Add \$3.4 Trillion To The National Debt Over The Next Ten Years.

“President Donald Trump’s ‘big, beautiful bill,’ which he signed into law this month, will add \$3.4 trillion to the U.S. national debt over the next decade, according to a report the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office published Monday.” [NBC News, [7/21/25](#)]

As A Member Of The Omaha Civilian Pension Board, Harding Managed An “Underfunded” And “Distressed” Omaha Civilian Pension That Was Reported To Have One Of The Lowest Returns On Investment Of Any Public Pension Nationwide

2017-Present: Harding Was A Member Of The Omaha Civilian Pension Board Of Trustees Which Oversaw And Managed The Assets Of The City Of Omaha Employees Retirement System

2017-Present: Harding Was A Member Of The Omaha Civilian Pension Board Of Trustees

June 2017: Brinker Harding Was Appointed July 2, 2017 Through July 1, 2021 To The Omaha Civilian Retirement System Board Of Trustees By Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert. [City of Omaha Human Resources, Office of the Mayor, [6/9/17](#)]



City of Omaha
Jean Stothert, Mayor

Office of the Mayor
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 300
Omaha, Nebraska 68183-0300
(402) 444-5000
FAX: (402) 444-6059

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

The attached Resolution appoints Brinker Harding to be the City Council representative on the Board of Trustees of the City of Omaha Employees Retirement System. This appointment is for a four-year term commencing on July 2, 2017 and running through July 1, 2021.

I respectfully request your approval of this Resolution.

Respectfully submitted:

Jean Stothert, Mayor
City of Omaha

- **City of Omaha Municipal Code: “One Trustee Who Shall Be A Member Of The City Council And Who Shall Be Appointed By The Mayor.”** “Sec. 22-41. - Board of trustees. The system shall be administered by a board of seven trustees determined as follows: (a)Two ex officio trustees, namely, the city comptroller and the city human resources director;(b)One trustee who shall be a member of the city council and who shall be appointed by the mayor;(c)Three trustees who shall be members of the system to be elected by secret ballot by

the members of the system for periods of three years in staggered annual elections, provided that not more than one trustee shall be elected from any one city department. As the terms of the trustees provided for in this subsection expire, new trustees shall be elected effective January 1 next to fill the vacancies thus created for periods of three years each, provided in no case shall more than one member be elected under this subsection from any one city department; and(d)A trustee not a member of the system to be elected for a period of three years by the other members of the board of trustees.” [City of Omaha Municipal Code, [11/11/25](#)]

June 2021: Brinker Harding Was Reappointed July 2, 2021 Through July 1, 2025 To The Omaha Civilian Retirement System Board Of Trustees By Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert. [City of Omaha Human Resources, Office of the Mayor, [6/21/21](#)]



City of Omaha
Jean Stothert, Mayor

Office of the Mayor
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 300
Omaha, Nebraska 68183-0300
(402) 444-5000
FAX: (402) 444-6059

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

The attached Resolution reappoints Brinker Harding to be the City Council representative on the Board of Trustees of the City of Omaha Employees' Retirement System. This appointment is for a four-year term commencing on July 2, 2021 and running through July 1, 2025.

I respectfully request your approval of this Resolution.

Respectfully submitted:

Jean Stothert, Mayor
City of Omaha

July 2025: Brinker Harding Was Reappointed July 16, 2025 Through July 15, 2029 To The Omaha Civilian Retirement System Board Of Trustees By Omaha Mayor John W. Ewing, Jr. [City of Omaha Human Resources, Office of the Mayor, [7/8/25](#)]



City of Omaha
John W. Ewing, Jr., Mayor

Law Department
Omaha/Douglas Civic Center
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 804
Omaha, Nebraska 68183-0804
(402) 444-5115

Matthew M. Kuhse
City Attorney

Honorable President
and Members of the City Council,

At the request of the Mayor, the attached Resolution reappoints Brinker Harding to be the City Council representative on the Board of Trustees of the City of Omaha Employees' Retirement System. This appointment is for a four-year term commencing July 16, 2025 and ending July 15, 2029.

I respectfully request your approval of this Resolution.

Respectfully submitted:

Bernard J. in den Bosch
Deputy City Attorney

The Omaha Civilian Pension Board Of Trustees Oversaw And Managed The Assets Of The City Of Omaha Employees Retirement System

Equable Institute: “The Pension Board Holds A Fiduciary Responsibility For Administration Of Benefits And Investment Of Assets.” “The most important part of pension governance is adherence to fiduciary responsibility. The pension board holds a fiduciary responsibility for administration of benefits and investment of assets, meaning they are legally and ethically bound to make decisions in the best interest of public workers. Given the complexity of pension board responsibilities, governments should make sure there are appropriate qualification standards for individuals to serve on the board. Retirement systems should also make sure they provide appropriate training for any board members who need it for public pension plan management.” [Equable Institute, [8/19/19](#)]

US Legal Forms: “A Pension Plan Trustee Is A Person Or Entity Responsible For Managing And Overseeing The Assets Of A Pension Plan.” “A pension plan trustee is a person or entity responsible for managing and overseeing the assets of a pension plan. This role includes making decisions about how the plan's assets are invested and ensuring that the plan operates in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. The trustee has the authority to act independently but may also follow the directions of a designated fiduciary. Additionally, the fiduciary can appoint one or more investment managers to handle the plan's assets.” [US Legal Forms, accessed [12/9/25](#)]

- **US Legal Forms: “This Role Includes Making Decisions About How The Plan's Assets Are Invested And Ensuring That The Plan Operates In Accordance With Relevant Laws And Regulations.”** “A pension plan trustee is a person or entity responsible for managing and overseeing the assets of a pension plan. This role includes making decisions about how the plan's assets are invested and ensuring that the plan operates in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. The trustee has the authority to act independently but may also follow the directions of a designated fiduciary. Additionally, the fiduciary can appoint one or more investment managers to handle the plan's assets.” [US Legal Forms, accessed [12/9/25](#)]

City Of Omaha Employees Retirement System (COERS) Board Of Trustees Bylaws List Actuarial Reports, Reports By Money Managers, And The Reading Of Financial Statement As Parts Of The Board’s Required Order Of Business. “Order Of Business A. The following Order of Business shall not be dispensed except as provided in Section B below. 1. Roll call and determination of quorum. 2. Actuarial report, if any. 3. Reports by Money Managers, if any. 4. Special Presentations, if any. 5. Approval of minutes of preceding meeting(s). 6. Reading of Financial Statement(s). 7. Old Business. 8. New Business which includes requests for disability pensions, service retirements, recalculations, refunds of contributions, survivor pensions, and death benefits, and any other business authorized by law to be heard before the Board. 9. Discussion and Action. 10. Executive Session, if required. B. The Order of Business may be suspended during any meeting by a majority vote of all Trustees present.” [City of Omaha Human Resources, [10/18/00](#)]

FY2020-FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was Underfunded And “Distressed,” With Funded Status Never Surpassing 60%

FY2020-FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was Underfunded And “Distressed,” With Funded Status Never Reaching Above 60%

FY2020: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 53.94% Funded And Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$232 Million

FY2020: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 53.94% Funded. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [7/30/21](#)]

Net pension liability: The components of the net pension liability for the City's Civilian Plan as of December 31, 2020 were as follows:

Total Pension Liability	\$ 504,033,060
Fiduciary Net Pension	(271,868,537)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 232,164,523
 Ratio of Fiduciary Net Position to total Pension Liability	 53.94%

Actuarial assumptions: The total pension liability of the Civilian Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2020, rolled forward one year to December 31, 2020 (the measurement date), using the entry age normal cost method and calculated based on the discount and actuarial assumptions below.

Inflation	2.50%
Projected salary increases	3.10% to 8.00%
Investment rate of return, net of investment expense	7.50%
Interest credited to cash balance accounts	6.00%

FY2020: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$232 Million. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [7/30/21](#)]

Sensitivity of the City's net pension liability to changes in the discount rate: The following presents the net pension liability of the Civilian Plan, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Civilian Plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.50%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.50%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6.50%)	Current Discount Rate (7.50%)	1% Increase (8.50%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 285,817,914	\$ 232,164,523	\$ 186,868,235

FY2021: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 59.25% Funded And Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$209 Million

FY2021: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 59.25% Funded. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [7/21/22](#)]

Net pension liability: The components of the net pension liability for the City's Civilian Plan as of December 31, 2021 were as follows:

Total Pension Liability	\$ 513,245,338
Fiduciary Net Pension	(304,077,329)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 209,168,009
 Ratio of Fiduciary Net Position to total Pension Liability	 59.25%

Actuarial assumptions: The total pension liability of the Civilian Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2021, rolled forward one year to December 31, 2021 (the measurement date), using the entry age normal cost method and calculated based on the discount and actuarial assumptions below.

Inflation	2.50%
Projected salary increases	Rates vary by source
Investment rate of return, net of investment expense	7.50%
Interest credited to cash balance accounts	6.00%

FY2021: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$209 Million. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [7/21/22](#)]

Sensitivity of the City's net pension liability to changes in the discount rate: The following presents the net pension liability of the Civilian Plan, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Civilian Plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.50%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.50%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6.50%)	Current Discount Rate (7.50%)	1% Increase (8.50%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 263,459,778	\$ 209,168,009	\$ 163,306,858

FY2022: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.53% Funded And Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$250 Million

FY2022: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.53% Funded. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [8/16/23](#)]

Net pension liability: The components of the net pension liability for the City's Civilian Plan as of December 31, 2022 were as follows:

Total pension liability	\$ 517,227,830
Fiduciary net pension	(266,514,803)
Net pension liability	\$ 250,713,027
Ratio of fiduciary net position to total pension liability	51.53%

Actuarial assumptions: The total pension liability of the Civilian Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2022, rolled forward one year to December 31, 2022 (the measurement date), using the entry age normal cost method and calculated based on the discount and actuarial assumptions below.

Inflation	2.50%
Projected salary increases	Rates vary by source
Investment rate of return, net of investment expense	7.50%
Interest credited to cash balance accounts	4.00%

FY2022: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$250 Million. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [8/16/23](#)]

Sensitivity of the City's net pension liability to changes in the discount rate: The following presents the net pension liability of the Civilian Plan, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Civilian Plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.50%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.50%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6.50%)	Current Discount Rate (7.50%)	1% Increase (8.50%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 304,881,426	\$ 250,713,027	\$ 204,935,648

FY2023: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.13% Funded And Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$257 Million

FY2023: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.13% Funded. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [9/30/24](#)]

Net pension liability: The components of the net pension liability for the City's Civilian Plan as of December 31, 2023 were as follows:

Total pension liability	\$ 526,841,935
Fiduciary net pension	(269,349,141)
Net pension liability	\$ 257,492,794
Ratio of fiduciary net position to total pension liability	51.13%

Actuarial assumptions: The total pension liability of the Civilian Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2023, rolled forward one year to December 31, 2023 (the measurement date), using the entry age normal cost method and calculated based on the discount and actuarial assumptions below.

Inflation	2.50%
Projected salary increases	Rates vary by service
Investment rate of return, net of investment expense	7.50%
Interest credited to cash balance accounts	4.82%

The actuarial assumptions used in the valuation are based on the results of the most recent actuarial experience study dated August 17, 2022, which covered the four-year period ending December 31, 2019.

FY2023: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$257 Million. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [9/30/24](#)]

Sensitivity of the City's net pension liability to changes in the discount rate: The following presents the net pension liability of the Civilian Plan, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Civilian Plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.50%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.50%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6.50%)	Current Discount Rate (7.50%)	1% Increase (8.50%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 312,730,284	\$ 257,492,794	\$ 210,797,231

FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.13% Funded And Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$255 Million

FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension Was 51.13% Funded. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [9/2/25](#)]

Net pension liability: The components of the net pension liability for the City's Civilian Plan as of December 31, 2024 were as follows:

Total pension liability	\$ 530,586,090
Fiduciary net pension	(275,189,949)
Net pension liability	\$ 255,396,141
Ratio of fiduciary net position to total pension liability	51.13%

Actuarial assumptions: The total pension liability of the Civilian Plan was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2024, rolled forward one year to December 31, 2024 (the measurement date), using the entry age normal cost method and calculated based on the discount and actuarial assumptions below.

Inflation	2.50%
Projected salary increases	Rates vary by service
Investment rate of return, net of investment expense	7.50%
Interest credited to cash balance accounts	4.82%

The actuarial assumptions used in the valuation are based on the results of the most recent actuarial experience study dated August 17, 2022, which covered the four-year period ending December 31, 2019.

FY2024: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had A Net Pension Liability Of Over \$255 Million. [City of Omaha Finance Department, [9/2/25](#)]

Sensitivity of the City's net pension liability to changes in the discount rate: The following presents the net pension liability of the Civilian Plan, calculated using the discount rate of 7.50%, as well as what the Civilian Plan's net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (6.50%) or 1-percentage-point higher (8.50%) than the current rate:

	1% Decrease (6.50%)	Current Discount Rate (7.50%)	1% Increase (8.50%)
Net Pension Liability	\$ 311,146,465	\$ 255,396,141	\$ 208,233,302

Public Pensions Funded To 80% Were Considered Healthy, While Those Under 60% Funded Were Considered “Distressed”

Net Pension Liability Was One Of The Methodologies Used To Determine If A Pension Was Underfunded

Diversification: “Net Pension Liability Represents The Difference Between A Pension Plan's Total Obligations To Its Current And Former Employees And The Fair Value Of The Assets Set Aside To Meet Those Obligations.” “Net pension liability represents the difference between a pension plan's total obligations to its current and former employees and the fair value of the assets set aside to meet those obligations. It is a key metric in financial accounting that reflects whether a defined benefit plan is overfunded (assets exceed liabilities) or underfunded (liabilities exceed assets). This liability is typically recognized on an organization's balance sheet and provides insight into its long-term financial health.” [Diversification, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

- **Michigan Office Of Retirement Services: “The Net Pension Liability Is The Amount Of The Total Pension Benefit That Is Not Funded By Investment Assets.”** “The net pension liability is the amount of the

total pension benefit that is not funded by investment assets. This net unfunded pension benefit will be a line item in your balance sheet. As a MPSERS participating employer you are required to record your proportionate share of the net pension liability. This liability is not new; it exists as a normal part of pension funding. A pension plan can have a net asset or net liability depending on whether it is overfunded or underfunded based on the value of its investments.” [Michigan Office Of Retirement Services, accessed [12/9/25](#)]

Diversification: “Net Pension Liability “Is A Key Metric In Financial Accounting That Reflects Whether A Defined Benefit Plan Is Overfunded (Assets Exceed Liabilities) Or Underfunded (Liabilities Exceed Assets).” “Net pension liability represents the difference between a pension plan's total obligations to its current and former employees and the fair value of the assets set aside to meet those obligations. It is a key metric in financial accounting that reflects whether a defined benefit plan is overfunded (assets exceed liabilities) or underfunded (liabilities exceed assets). This liability is typically recognized on an organization's balance sheet and provides insight into its long-term financial health.” [Diversification, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

Diversification: “The Terms ‘Net Pension Liability’ And ‘Unfunded Actuarial Accrued Liability’ (UAAL) [...] Refer To The Shortfall Where A Pension Plan's Obligations Exceed Its Assets.” “The terms ‘net pension liability’ and ‘unfunded actuarial accrued liability’ (UAAL) are closely related but have distinct meanings, particularly in governmental accounting. Both refer to the shortfall where a pension plan's obligations exceed its assets [...] While the UAAL aimed to present a stable long-term funding measure, the NPL provides a more current reflection of the plan's financial position by using market values, making it more comparable to how other liabilities are reported.” [Diversification, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

- **Michigan Office Of Retirement Services: “A Pension Plan Can Have A Net Asset Or Net Liability Depending On Whether It Is Overfunded Or Underfunded Based On The Value Of Its Investments.”** “The net pension liability is the amount of the total pension benefit that is not funded by investment assets. This net unfunded pension benefit will be a line item in your balance sheet. As a MPSERS participating employer you are required to record your proportionate share of the net pension liability. This liability is not new; it exists as a normal part of pension funding. A pension plan can have a net asset or net liability depending on whether it is overfunded or underfunded based on the value of its investments.” [Michigan Office Of Retirement Services, accessed [12/9/25](#)]

Funded Status Could Be Calculated By Determining The Fiduciary Net Position As A Percentage Of The Total Pension Liability

One Way To Calculate A Pension Plan’s Funded Status Or Funded Ratio Was To Calculate Its Fiduciary Net Position As A Percentage Of The Total Pension Liability. [The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, accessed [12/9/25](#)]

GASB 68 at a Glance, continued

Section D—Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability:

D. Plan fiduciary net position as a percentage of the total pension liability xx.x%

The percentage of your employer’s *Total Pension Liability* that it could pay with its current pension assets.

Also known as your employer’s *Funded Status* or *Funded Ratio*.

Equable Institute: Public Pensions Less Than 60% Funded Were Considered “Distressed”

Investopedia: “Many Industry Experts Consider A Fund That Is At Least 80% Funded To Be Healthy.”

“Future liabilities, or benefit obligations, are what the plan owes employees for service. Plan assets, which are usually managed by an investment team, are used to pay for retiree benefits. Funded statuses can range from fully funded to unfunded. Many industry experts consider a fund that is at least 80% funded to be healthy, though pension plans are regulated and may be required to contribute to the plan if funding falls below a certain level as calculated by the plan's outside actuaries each year.” [Investopedia, [4/30/25](#)]

Equable Institute: Public Pensions Funded 60% Or Less Were Considered “Distressed.” “Within the states, funded ratios and unfunded liability levels continue to vary considerably from state to state. For example, in California the Public Employees’ Retirement System is 72% funded while the City of Los Angeles Fire and Police Pension Plan is 99.6% funded. A few state pension plans still report a Resilient funded status (90% or better for three years continuously). However, the vast majority of U.S. pension plans have a Fragile (90% to 60%) or Distressed (60% or less) funded status.” [Equable Institute, [1/8/24](#)]

2022: The Nebraska State Legislature Retirement Systems Committee Reported That The Omaha Civilian Pension Had The Lowest Funding Status Of Any Of The Public Pensions In Nebraska, And That The City Had Failed To Pay Millions Of Dollars In Its Annual Required Contributions To The Pension

November 2022: Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report Listed The Omaha Civilian Pension With Lowest Funding Status Of Any Of The Underfunded Public Pensions In Nebraska

LB 759 Required Reporting Of Underfunded Pensions To The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee If Their Contributions Did Not Equal The Actuarial Requirement For Funding Or The Funded Ratio Of The Plan Was Less Than 80%. “In 2014, LB 759 was enacted to require reporting by political subdivisions with underfunded defined benefit plans in order to provide oversight of these entities by the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. The bill was codified at Neb. Rev. Stat. 13-2402. It requires any governing entity that offers a defined benefit plan which was open to new employees on January 2004, to file a report with the Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee if the most recent actuarial valuation report indicates that (1) the contributions do not equal the actuarial requirement for funding or (2) the funded ratio of the plan is less than eighty percent. The report must include, at a minimum, an analysis of the future benefit changes, contribution changes, or other proposed corrective action to improve the plan's funding condition.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report: The Omaha Civilian Pension Had The Lowest Funding Status Of Any Of The Underfunded Public Pensions In Nebraska In 2020/2021 And 2021/2022. “In 2021, there were eight political subdivisions with defined benefit plans funded below the 80% funding level. This year, the Eastern Nebraska Health Agency Plan increased its funding level to 81% and Lincoln Police and Fire increased its funding level to 80%, so they were not required to report this year. Below is a list of the six political subdivisions with defined benefit plans that remain funded below 80% and a summary of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 funding status for each plan: Douglas County Employees, Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees, Omaha Civilian Employees, Omaha Police and Fire, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha Public Schools – Omaha School Employees Retirement.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

POLITICAL SUBDIVISION	2021/2022 FUNDING STATUS*	2020/2021 FUNDING STATUS*
Douglas County Employees	73.9%	70.9%
Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees	71.5%	68.5%
Omaha Civilian Employees	53.7%	52.4%
Omaha Police and Fire	57.5%	55.1%
Omaha Public Power District	75.5%	72.0%
Omaha Public Schools (OSERS plan)	63.0%	63.0%

*Funding status year varies because some plans are based on calendar year or a September through August plan year so current plan year data is not yet available.

- November 2022: The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report Listed The Omaha Civilian Pension's 2020/2021 Funding Status At 52.4%.** "In 2021, there were eight political subdivisions with defined benefit plans funded below the 80% funding level. This year, the Eastern Nebraska Health Agency Plan increased its funding level to 81% and Lincoln Police and Fire increased its funding level to 80%, so they were not required to report this year. Below is a list of the six political subdivisions with defined benefit plans that remain funded below 80% and a summary of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 funding status for each plan: Douglas County Employees, Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees, Omaha Civilian Employees, Omaha Police and Fire, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha Public Schools – Omaha School Employees Retirement." [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

POLITICAL SUBDIVISION	2021/2022 FUNDING STATUS*	2020/2021 FUNDING STATUS*
Douglas County Employees	73.9%	70.9%
Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees	71.5%	68.5%
Omaha Civilian Employees	53.7%	52.4%
Omaha Police and Fire	57.5%	55.1%
Omaha Public Power District	75.5%	72.0%
Omaha Public Schools (OSERS plan)	63.0%	63.0%

*Funding status year varies because some plans are based on calendar year or a September through August plan year so current plan year data is not yet available.

- November 2022: The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report Listed The Omaha Civilian Pension's 2021/2022 Funding Status At 53.7%.** "In 2021, there were eight political subdivisions with defined benefit plans funded below the 80% funding level. This year, the Eastern Nebraska Health Agency Plan increased its funding level to 81% and Lincoln Police and Fire increased its funding level to 80%, so they were not required to report this year. Below is a list of the six political subdivisions with defined benefit plans that remain funded below 80% and a summary of the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 funding status for each plan: Douglas County Employees, Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees, Omaha Civilian Employees, Omaha Police and Fire, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha Public Schools – Omaha School Employees Retirement." [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

POLITICAL SUBDIVISION	2021/2022 FUNDING STATUS*	2020/2021 FUNDING STATUS*
Douglas County Employees	73.9%	70.9%
Metro Area Transit Hourly Employees	71.5%	68.5%
Omaha Civilian Employees	53.7%	52.4%
Omaha Police and Fire	57.5%	55.1%
Omaha Public Power District	75.5%	72.0%
Omaha Public Schools (OSERS plan)	63.0%	63.0%

*Funding status year varies because some plans are based on calendar year or a September through August plan year so current plan year data is not yet available.

NOTE: The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee calculated the funding status using Unfunded Actuarial Liability (UAL), which is a different method from the calculation listed in the Omaha Civilian Pension's reports cited in the section above. Additionally, the Retirement Systems Committee calculated funding status based on data between January 1, 2022 and October 21, 2022, rather than the whole year.

November 2022: The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report Found That Between 2017 And 2021 The City Of Omaha Failed To Pay More Than \$7.5 Million Of Its Full Annual Required Contributions Into The Omaha Civilian Pension

National Association of State Retirement Administrators: “The Annual Required Contribution, Or ARC, Refers To The Amount Needed To Be Contributed By Employers To Adequately Fund A Public Pension Plan.” “The annual required contribution, or ARC, refers to the amount needed to be contributed by employers to adequately fund a public pension plan. The ARC is the sum of two factors: a) the cost of pension benefits being accrued in the current year (known as the normal cost), plus b) the cost to amortize, or pay off, the plan’s unfunded liability. The ARC is the required employer contribution after accounting for other revenue, chiefly expected investment earnings and contributions from employee participants.” [National Association of State Retirement Administrators, [March 2015](#)]

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Report: “The Percentage Of The ARC The City Of Omaha Has Paid Over The Past 5 Years Has Declined [...] The City Has Paid -\$7.573 Million Less Than The Full Amount Of The ARC Between 2017 Through 2021.” “The percentage of the ARC the City of Omaha has paid over the past 5 years has declined. In 2016, the City of Omaha paid 106.81% [...] The City has paid -\$7.573 million less than the full amount of the ARC between 2017 through 2021. No more recent data is available. Last year the Unfunded Actuarial Liability decreased slightly from \$230.2 million to \$229 million.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

- **In 2017, The City Of Omaha Paid 91.2% Of Its Annual Required Contribution.** “The percentage of the ARCs that you pay, the actuarially required contributions over the last five years has continually declined. In 2016, you paid 106.81 percent, but then in 2010-- 2017, you paid 91.2 percent of the ARC. In 2018, you paid 86.8 percent and in 2019, you paid 87.4 and last year you paid 88.24 percent of the ARC. We don't have this year's yet. And your unfunded actuarial liability actually decreased slightly from \$230 to \$229 million.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]
- **In 2018, The City Of Omaha Paid 86.8% Of Its Annual Required Contribution.** “The percentage of the ARCs that you pay, the actuarially required contributions over the last five years has continually declined. In 2016, you paid 106.81 percent, but then in 2010-- 2017, you paid 91.2 percent of the ARC. In 2018, you paid 86.8 percent and in 2019, you paid 87.4 and last year you paid 88.24 percent of the ARC. We don't have this year's yet. And your unfunded actuarial liability actually decreased slightly from \$230 to \$229 million.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]
- **In 2019, The City Of Omaha Paid 87.4% Of Its Annual Required Contribution.** “The percentage of the ARCs that you pay, the actuarially required contributions over the last five years has continually declined. In 2016, you paid 106.81 percent, but then in 2010-- 2017, you paid 91.2 percent of the ARC. In 2018, you paid 86.8 percent and in 2019, you paid 87.4 and last year you paid 88.24 percent of the ARC. We don't have this year's yet. And your unfunded actuarial liability actually decreased slightly from \$230 to \$229 million.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

November 2022: The Republican Chair Of The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee Questioned The Management Of The Omaha Civilian Pension And Called Its Underfunding “A Blatant Disrespect For The Employees As Well As The Citizens Of Omaha”

State Senator Mark Kolterman Was The Republican Chair Of The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee

Senator Mark Kolterman Was The Chair Of The Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. “Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans Committee Members Senator Mark Kolterman, Chair Senator Brett Lindstrom, Vice-Chair Senator Robert Clements Senator Mike McDonnell Senator Julie Slama Senator John Stinner Kate Allen, Committee Legal Counsel Katie Quintero, Committee Clerk.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

- **Senator Mark Kolterman Was A Registered Republican.** “Accusations of partisanship also surfaced when Sen. Mark Kolterman of Seward was objecting to Linehan’s proposal to move his district, which has been growing slowly, to fast-growing Sarpy County and Saunders County. Kolterman, a registered Republican, objected to the fact that the state Republican Party sent out an email in favor of Linehan’s plan, ‘I told you earlier I’ve been a Republican my entire life. This year it’ll be 50 years. But when I took the oath of office, I didn’t take it to serve the Republican Party. I was elected by the residents of District 24 to serve the state of Nebraska,’ Kolterman said.” [Nebraska Public Media, [9/15/21](#)]

State Senator Kolterman Said That Legislators Had Asked For Funding Level Improvements For The Omaha Civilian Pension Plan “For [The] Last Seven Years” And That Consultants Had Warned The City That They “Were Going To Run Out Of Money” If They Did Not Make Minimum ARC Payments

Senator Kolterman On The Underfunded Status Of The Omaha Civilian Pension Plan: “It's Almost Like Everything We've Asked For Last Seven Years Has Fallen On Deaf Ears.” “The progress of making Omaha employees' pension plans fully funded draws the ire of one state senator. ‘It's almost like everything we've asked for last seven years has fallen on deaf ears,’ said State Sen. Mark Kolterman. Omaha's police and fire retirement system is currently funded at 57.5%. Its plan for civilians is funded at 53.7%. But Kolterman said Omaha has not been making the suggested minimum annual contributions to catch up in the past five years. ‘The people in the pension plan deserve to know the plan going to be funded,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

Senator Kolterman: “Cavanaugh Macdonald Had Indicated, That You, You Were Going To Run Out Of Money If You Didn't Make Those ARC Payments [...] That's Just The Minimum Amount That You Should Be Making.” “But, but my concern is-- and this is exactly what we saw with the Omaha Public Schools plan, they weren't making their ARC payments. And that, that's what's-- I mean, if you go back to 2014, that's what Cavanaugh Macdonald had indicated, that you, you were going to run out of money if you didn't make those ARC payments. And that's, that's just the minimum amount that you should be making. The other thing that we've heard for the-- at least since I've chaired this committee the last seven years is that you couldn't put more money in than an equal amount to what the, the employees were putting in because of your charter.” [Nebraska Legislature Retirement Systems Committee, Report on Political Subdivision Underfunded Defined Benefit Retirement Plans, [11/22/22](#)]

- **NC League Of Municipalities: “Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting, D/B/A CavMac Was Founded To Offer State And Local Governments Actuarial Consulting Services For Their Employee Pension And Benefit Plans.”** “Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting, D/B/A CavMac was founded to offer state and local governments actuarial consulting services for their employee pension and benefit plans. Our capabilities are well recognized by the public sector benefit plan community. Cavanaugh Macdonald Consulting, LLC provides a broad range of actuarial consulting services to the public sector. We currently serve as the retained actuary and health care consultant for statewide and municipal retirement systems and retiree health care plans across the country from our two locations in Omaha, NE and Atlanta, GA.” [NC League Of Municipalities, accessed [12/10/25](#)]

Senator Kolterman: “The People In The Pension Plan Deserve To Know The Plan [Is] Going To Be Funded.” “The progress of making Omaha employees' pension plans fully funded draws the ire of one state senator. ‘It's almost like everything we've asked for last seven years has fallen on deaf ears,’ said State Sen. Mark Kolterman. Omaha's police and fire retirement system is currently funded at 57.5%. Its plan for civilians is funded at 53.7%. But Kolterman said Omaha has not been making the suggested minimum annual contributions to catch up

in the past five years. ‘The people in the pension plan deserve to know the plan going to be funded,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

State Senator Kolterman Questioned Why Designated Tax Revenue Was Not Closing The Gap On Pension Plan Funding

KETV: “Kolterman Wanted To Know Why Omaha Isn't Using The Restaurant Tax It Imposed 12 Years Ago To Close The Gap.” “Kolterman wanted to know why Omaha isn't using the restaurant tax it imposed 12 years ago to close the gap. ‘It was my understanding that was designed to take care of the pension plan,’ Kolterman said. ‘What are you doing with the excess money that's coming from the restaurant tax? Is that going into the general fund?’ According to Deputy City Attorney Bernard in den Bosch, the Omaha Charter limits the amount the city can pay annually to only the amount matched by employee contributions. The city is currently in the process of reviewing the charter but that change is not being considered. ‘It doesn't make any sense to me,’ Kolterman said. ‘I think the citizens in Omaha need to understand what's going on here. I think it's a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

- **Senator Kolterman: “It Was My Understanding That [Restaurant Tax] Was Designed To Take Care Of The Pension Plan [...] What Are You Doing With The Excess Money That's Coming From The Restaurant Tax?”** “Kolterman wanted to know why Omaha isn't using the restaurant tax it imposed 12 years ago to close the gap. ‘It was my understanding that was designed to take care of the pension plan,’ Kolterman said. ‘What are you doing with the excess money that's coming from the restaurant tax? Is that going into the general fund?’ According to Deputy City Attorney Bernard in den Bosch, the Omaha Charter limits the amount the city can pay annually to only the amount matched by employee contributions. The city is currently in the process of reviewing the charter but that change is not being considered. ‘It doesn't make any sense to me,’ Kolterman said. ‘I think the citizens in Omaha need to understand what's going on here. I think it's a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

The City Of Omaha Responded That The City Was Limited By The Charter To Pay Annually Only The Amount Matched By Employee Contributions, Yet At The Same Time Admitted They Were Not Planning To Change The Charter

The Deputy City Attorney Said The Omaha Charter Limits The Amount The City Can Pay Annually To Only The Amount Matched By Employee Contributions. “Kolterman wanted to know why Omaha isn't using the restaurant tax it imposed 12 years ago to close the gap. ‘It was my understanding that was designed to take care of the pension plan,’ Kolterman said. ‘What are you doing with the excess money that's coming from the restaurant tax? Is that going into the general fund?’ According to Deputy City Attorney Bernard in den Bosch, the Omaha Charter limits the amount the city can pay annually to only the amount matched by employee contributions. The city is currently in the process of reviewing the charter but that change is not being considered. ‘It doesn't make any sense to me,’ Kolterman said. ‘I think the citizens in Omaha need to understand what's going on here. I think it's a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

- **2022: According To The Deputy City Attorney, Omaha Was Currently In The Process Of Reviewing The Charter But Was Not Considering A Change To The Limits On City Contributions.** “Kolterman wanted to know why Omaha isn't using the restaurant tax it imposed 12 years ago to close the gap. ‘It was my understanding that was designed to take care of the pension plan,’ Kolterman said. ‘What are you doing with the excess money that's coming from the restaurant tax? Is that going into the general fund?’ According to Deputy City Attorney Bernard in den Bosch, the Omaha Charter limits the amount the city can pay annually to only the amount matched by employee contributions. The city is currently in the process of reviewing the charter but that change is not being considered. ‘It doesn't make any sense to me,’ Kolterman said. ‘I think the citizens in Omaha need to understand what's going on here. I think it's a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

- **Harding Previously Served As Chairman Of The 2013 Omaha Charter Review Convention.** “Name Brinker Harding Occupation Senior Vice President at Colliers International [...] Prior to being elected to the Omaha City Council in 2017, I served as the Chairman of the Omaha Planning Board, Chairman of the 2013 Charter review Convention, Campaign Manager for Hal Daub’s 2009 campaign, and as Chief of Staff to Mayor Hal Daub.” [Omaha Daily Record, [8/16/22](#)]
- **KPTM: “Any Amendments To The Charter Must Be Approved By Convention Members And The Omaha City Council.”** “A Charter study convention will meet next month to consider amendments to the City Charter. The Convention, which was last held in 2013, requires an extensive citizen-led review of the Charter at least every 10 years. Any amendments to the Charter must be approved by convention members and the Omaha city council. Approved amendments will then appear on this November’s ballot for public vote.” [KPTM, [4/6/22](#)]

State Senator Kolterman Said That The Underfunding Of The Omaha Pension Plan Was “A Blatant Disrespect For The Employees As Well As The Citizens Of Omaha”

Senator Kolterman: “It Doesn’t Make Any Sense To Me [...] I Think The Citizens In Omaha Need To Understand What’s Going On Here. I Think It’s A Blatant Disrespect For The Employees As Well As The Citizens Of Omaha.” “Kolterman wanted to know why Omaha isn’t using the restaurant tax it imposed 12 years ago to close the gap. ‘It was my understanding that was designed to take care of the pension plan,’ Kolterman said. ‘What are you doing with the excess money that’s coming from the restaurant tax? Is that going into the general fund?’ According to Deputy City Attorney Bernard in den Bosch, the Omaha Charter limits the amount the city can pay annually to only the amount matched by employee contributions. The city is currently in the process of reviewing the charter but that change is not being considered. ‘It doesn’t make any sense to me,’ Kolterman said. ‘I think the citizens in Omaha need to understand what’s going on here. I think it’s a blatant disrespect for the employees as well as the citizens of Omaha,’ Kolterman said.” [KETV, [11/23/22](#)]

2024-2025: The City Of Omaha Received A Lower Bond Ratings Due In Part To The Omaha Civilian Pension Being Underfunded

2024-2025: The City Of Omaha Received Aa2 Bond Rating From Moody’s Investors Services And An AA+ Bond Rating From S & P Global

Ratings Agencies Researched And Assigned Ratings Based On The Financial Health Of The Bond Issuer

Fidelity: “Ratings Agencies Research The Financial Health Of Each Bond Issuer (Including Issuers Of Municipal Bonds) And Assign Ratings To The Bonds Being Offered.” “Ratings agencies research the financial health of each bond issuer (including issuers of municipal bonds) and assign ratings to the bonds being offered. Each agency has a similar hierarchy to help investors assess that bond’s credit quality compared to other bonds. Bonds with a rating of BBB- (on the Standard & Poor’s and Fitch scale) or Baa3 (on Moody’s) or better are considered ‘investment-grade.’ Bonds with lower ratings are considered ‘speculative’ and often referred to as ‘high-yield’ or ‘junk’ bonds.” [Fidelity, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

Fidelity: “Bonds With A Rating Of BBB- (On The Standard & Poor’s And Fitch Scale) Or Baa3 (On Moody’s) Or Better Are Considered ‘Investment-Grade.’ “Ratings agencies research the financial health of each bond issuer (including issuers of municipal bonds) and assign ratings to the bonds being offered. Each agency has a similar hierarchy to help investors assess that bond’s credit quality compared to other bonds. Bonds with a rating of BBB- (on the Standard & Poor’s and Fitch scale) or Baa3 (on Moody’s) or better are considered ‘investment-grade.’ Bonds with lower ratings are considered ‘speculative’ and often referred to as ‘high-yield’ or ‘junk’ bonds.” [Fidelity, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

Aaa Was The Strongest Moody’s Bond Rating. [Fidelity, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

How bond ratings work

Ratings agencies research the financial health of each bond issuer (including issuers of municipal bonds) and assign ratings to the bonds being offered. Each agency has a similar hierarchy to help investors assess that bond's credit quality compared to other bonds. Bonds with a rating of BBB- (on the Standard & Poor's and Fitch scale) or Baa3 (on Moody's) or better are considered "investment-grade." Bonds with lower ratings are considered "speculative" and often referred to as "high-yield" or "junk" bonds.

Investment grade	Moody's	Standard & Poor's	Fitch
Strongest	Aaa	AAA	AAA
	Aa1	AA+	AA+
	Aa2	AA	AA
	Aa3	AA-	AA-
	A1	A+	A+
	A2	A	A
	A3	A-	A-
	Baa1	BBB+	BBB+
	Baa2	BBB	BBB
	Baa3	BBB-	BBB-

AAA Was The Strongest Standard & Poor's Bond Rating. [Fidelity, accessed [11/14/25](#)]

How bond ratings work

Ratings agencies research the financial health of each bond issuer (including issuers of municipal bonds) and assign ratings to the bonds being offered. Each agency has a similar hierarchy to help investors assess that bond's credit quality compared to other bonds. Bonds with a rating of BBB- (on the Standard & Poor's and Fitch scale) or Baa3 (on Moody's) or better are considered "investment-grade." Bonds with lower ratings are considered "speculative" and often referred to as "high-yield" or "junk" bonds.

Investment grade	Moody's	Standard & Poor's	Fitch
Strongest	Aaa	AAA	AAA
	Aa1	AA+	AA+
	Aa2	AA	AA
	Aa3	AA-	AA-
	A1	A+	A+
	A2	A	A
	A3	A-	A-
	Baa1	BBB+	BBB+
	Baa2	BBB	BBB
	Baa3	BBB-	BBB-

2024: The City Of Omaha Received Aa2 Bond Rating From Moody's Investors Services And An AA+ Bond Rating From S & P Global, The Third Highest And Second Highest Ratings Respectively

2024: "Moody's Ratings (Moody's) Has Assigned Aa2 Ratings To The City Of Omaha." "Moody's Ratings (Moody's) has assigned Aa2 ratings to the City of Omaha, NE's Various Purpose Bonds, Series 2024 with a proposed par amount of about \$72 million, the Lease Revenue Bonds, Series 2024C with a proposed par amount of about \$32 million and the Lease Revenue Bonds Taxable Series 2024D with a proposed par amount of about \$8 million. We maintain the city's Aa2 issuer rating, the Aa2 rating on the outstanding general obligation unlimited tax

(GOULT) bonds and the Aa2 rating on the outstanding lease revenue bonds. The city has about \$1 billion in debt associated with its governmental type activities and just over \$410 million in enterprise related debt. The outlook is stable.” [Moody's, [11/17/24](#)]

- **Aa2 Was Moody’s Third Highest Bond Rating.** “Omaha’s bond rating will remain at one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors Services and S & P Global. Following the annual review of the City’s 2023 financial condition, S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody’s assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

2024: Omaha Received An AA+ Bond Rating From and S & P Global. “Omaha’s bond rating will remain at one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors Services and S & P Global. Following the annual review of the City’s 2023 financial condition, S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody’s assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

- **An AA+ Was S & P Global’s Second Highest Bond Rating.** “Omaha’s bond rating will remain at one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors Services and S & P Global. Following the annual review of the City’s 2023 financial condition, S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody’s assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

2025: The City Of Omaha Received Aa2 Bond Rating From Moody’s Investors Services And An AA+ Bond Rating From S & P Global, The Third Highest And Second Highest Ratings Respectively

2025: “Moody's Ratings (Moody's) Has Assigned Aa2 Ratings To The City Of Omaha” “Moody's Ratings (Moody's) has assigned Aa2 ratings to the City of Omaha, NE's proposed \$37.6 million General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025A, \$57.4 million Lease Revenue Bonds, Series 2025C, and \$7.5 million Lease Revenue Bonds, Series 2025D. We maintain Omaha's Aa2 issuer, general obligation unlimited tax (GOULT), and lease revenue bond ratings, as well as the city's other outstanding ratings. Following the sale, the city will have about \$1.2 billion in debt associated with governmental type activities and about \$435 million in enterprise related debt. The outlook is stable.” [Moody's, [9/2/25](#)]

- **Aa2 Was Moody’s Third Highest Bond Rating.** “Omaha’s bond rating will remain at one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors Services and S & P Global. Following the annual review of the City’s 2023 financial condition, S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody’s assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

2025: Omaha Received An AA+ Bond Rating From and S & P Global. “Signaling Omaha’s solid fiscal health, two national firms that measure credit health issued high ratings this week. S&P Global Ratings assigned its AA+ long-term rating after reviewing millions of dollars in city bonds. Moody's Ratings gave Omaha an Aa2 score. Both called Omaha's economic outlook ‘stable.’ Omaha Mayor John Ewing said the city is entering an exciting new era of growth, evident in its changing skyline and numerous economic development projects.” [City Of Omaha, [9/5/25](#)]

- **An AA+ Was S & P Global’s Second Highest Bond Rating.** “Omaha’s bond rating will remain at one of the highest ratings from Moody's Investors Services and S & P Global. Following the annual review of the City’s 2023 financial condition, S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody’s assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

2024 -2025: Moody's And S&P Global Cited The City's Long-Term Liabilities, Including The Underfunded Civilian Pension, As A Reason Why Omaha's Bond Rating Was Not Higher

Public Pensions Represent Significant Long-Term Liabilities For States

Pew Research: “Since 2008, Public Pensions Have Persistently Remained The Largest Of The Three Long-Term Obligations That States Regularly Report On.” “Since 2008, public pensions have persistently remained the largest of the three long-term obligations that states regularly report on, even as the burden from outstanding bond debt and retiree health care has eased. Nationwide, unfunded pension liabilities—the gap between the amount needed to pay for promised pension benefits and the amount set aside for them—grew to nearly \$1.3 trillion in fiscal year 2022, largely because of lower-than-expected investment returns.” [Pew Research, [6/30/25](#)]

2024-2025: Moody's And S&P Global Cited The Underfunded Civilian Pension As A Reason Omaha's Bond Rating Was Not Higher

November 2024: “Both Agencies Remain Critical Of The City's Underfunded Pensions.” “S & P assigned its AA+ rating with a stable outlook, the second highest rating. Moody's assigned its third highest rating of Aa2 with a stable outlook on the City's General Obligation Bonds. [...] Both agencies remain critical of the city's underfunded pensions. The S & P report cites a lack of support from the City's unions to fully fund the pensions, ‘Omaha's labor unions' reluctance to contribute their actuarially determined contribution continues to constrain material progress in reducing unfunded liabilities.” [City Of Omaha, [11/21/24](#)]

September 2025: “S&P Referenced The City's Ongoing Challenge With Underfunded Retirement Systems, Both Civilian And Police And Fire. Moody's Said The City's Long-Term Liabilities To Revenue Ratio Remains A Weakness.” “S&P referenced the city's ongoing challenge with underfunded retirement systems, both civilian and police and fire. Moody's said the city's long-term liabilities to revenue ratio remains a weakness. Ewing said he understands that the city has made strides in addressing the pension issue and will continue working to improve it.” [City Of Omaha, [9/5/25](#)]

Moody's Said That Significant And Sustained Reduction In The City's Long-Term Liabilities Ratio Could Lead To A Ratings Upgrade

Moody's: “The Long-Term Liabilities Ratio Exceeds 350% Of Revenue And The Associated Fixed Costs Hover Around 20% Of Revenue, Both Of Which Will Remain A Relative Weakness At The Aa2 Rating.” “The city's financial operations, about three-quarters of which are funded from governmental revenue, are expected to remain solid. Available fund balance will hover around 30% of revenue, supported by the city's ample revenue-raising flexibility and strong revenue performance. The long-term liabilities ratio exceeds 350% of revenue and the associated fixed costs hover around 20% of revenue, both of which will remain a relative weakness at the Aa2 rating.” [Moody's, [11/17/24](#)]

Moody's: “Factors That Could Lead To An Upgrade Of The Ratings [...] Significant And Sustained Reduction In Long-Term Liabilities Ratio To Well Below 300% Of Revenue.” “Factors that could lead to an upgrade of the ratings: material and sustained growth in available fund balance to levels in line with higher rated peers, significant and sustained reduction in long-term liabilities ratio to well below 300% of revenue. Factors that could lead to a downgrade of the ratings: substantial weakening of the regional economy or resident income levels a weakened financial profile with available fund balance consistently below 20% of revenue growth in long-term liabilities ratio to levels consistently above 400% of revenue” [Moody's, [11/17/24](#)]

Moody's: “Factors That Could Lead To A Downgrade Of The Ratings [...] Growth In Long-Term Liabilities Ratio To Levels Consistently Above 400% Of Revenue.” “Factors that could lead to an upgrade of the ratings: material and sustained growth in available fund balance to levels in line with higher rated peers, significant and sustained reduction in long-term liabilities ratio to well below 300% of revenue. Factors that could lead to a downgrade of the ratings: substantial weakening of the regional economy or resident income levels, a weakened

financial profile with available fund balance consistently below 20% of revenue, growth in long-term liabilities ratio to levels consistently above 400% of revenue.” [Moody's, [11/17/24](#)]

Being Able To Attain A Higher Bond Rating Would Have Saved The City Of Omaha And Its Taxpayers Money

A Municipality’s Bond Rating Had A Direct Impact On The Cost Of Borrowing Money To Finance Capital Improvement Projects

Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “The Bond Rating That A Municipality Receives From A Rating Agency Is Important [...] It Assesses The Overall Economic, Operational, And Financial Strength Of A Community.” “The bond rating that a municipality receives from a rating agency is important for several reasons. First, it assesses the overall economic, operational, and financial strength of a community. Second, it has a direct impact on the cost of borrowing money to finance capital improvement projects. The money saved from having a high bond rating could be substantial given the amount of bonds issued by a community.” [Worcester Regional Research Bureau, [5/22/07](#)]

Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “The Bond Rating That A Municipality Receives From A Rating Agency Is Important [...] It Has A Direct Impact On The Cost Of Borrowing Money To Finance Capital Improvement Projects.” “The bond rating that a municipality receives from a rating agency is important for several reasons. First, it assesses the overall economic, operational, and financial strength of a community. Second, it has a direct impact on the cost of borrowing money to finance capital improvement projects. The money saved from having a high bond rating could be substantial given the amount of bonds issued by a community.” [Worcester Regional Research Bureau, [5/22/07](#)]

- **Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “The Money Saved From Having A High Bond Rating Could Be Substantial Given The Amount Of Bonds Issued By A Community.”** “The bond rating that a municipality receives from a rating agency is important for several reasons. First, it assesses the overall economic, operational, and financial strength of a community. Second, it has a direct impact on the cost of borrowing money to finance capital improvement projects. The money saved from having a high bond rating could be substantial given the amount of bonds issued by a community.” [Worcester Regional Research Bureau, [5/22/07](#)]

Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “A Decrease In A City’s Bond Rating Translates Into The City’s Taxpayers Having To Pay More To Finance [City] Projects”

Discover Mansfield: “The Higher The Town’s Bond Rating, The Lower The Interest Rate Is For The Town To Borrow Money [...] Potentially Saving Millions Of Dollars For Municipalities With High Bond Ratings.” “Moody’s and S&P Global, two of the “Big Three” credit rating agencies, each use alphabet letters with numbers or symbols to assign municipal bond ratings. The higher the town’s bond rating, the lower the interest rate is for the town to borrow money, which can significantly impact the total cost for major capital projects and improvements, potentially saving millions of dollars for municipalities with high bond ratings.” [Discover Mansfield, [8/30/24](#)]

Worcester Regional Research Bureau: “A Decrease In A City’s Bond Rating Translates Into The City’s Taxpayers Having To Pay More To Finance The Projects Undertaken By The Municipality.” “For instance, if two communities were to request a bond sale of \$90 million to construct a new high school, and one community received an Aaa rating and another a Baa rating, the difference in annual debt paid could amount to \$625,000 annually, or \$12.5 million over the life of a 20-year bond. Therefore, a decrease in a city’s bond rating translates into the city’s taxpayers having to pay more to finance the projects undertaken by the municipality.” [Worcester Regional Research Bureau, [5/22/07](#)]

2024: According To Reason Foundation, The Omaha Civilian Pension Had One Of The Lowest Returns On Investments Of Any Public Pension In The Country

2024: According To Reason Foundation, The Omaha Civilian Pension Was One Of Six Public Pension In The Country With A Return On Investments Lower Than 6%

2024: According To Reason Foundation, The Omaha Civilian Pension Had An Annual Return On Investment Of 5.92%

The Omaha Civilian Pension Had Return On Investments Of 5.92%, Which Made It One Of Only Six Public Pension In The Country With Returns Lower Than 6%. “The Fire Fighters’ Relief and Retirement Fund of Austin, Texas, earned just a 4.7% return in 2024. It was the only pension system in the nation that earned less than a 5% return in 2024. The fund’s debt increased from \$297.5 million to \$349.5 million in 2024. Five other public pension plans failed earn a 6% returns in 2024: the Kansas City Public School Retirement System (5.2%), the Educational Employees’ Supplementary Retirement System of Fairfax County (5.68%), Oregon Public Employees Retirement System(5.8%), Omaha City Employees Retirement System (5.92%), and the South Dakota Retirement System (5.98%).” [Reason Foundation, [8/30/25](#)]

2024: According To Reason Foundation, The Omaha Civilian Pension Had The Fifth Lowest Annual Return On Investment Of Any Public Pension In The U.S.

According To Reason Foundation, The Omaha Civilian Pension Had The Fifth Lowest Annual Return On Investment Of Any U.S. Public Pension. [Reason Foundation, [8/30/25](#)]

Public pension plans with the lowest annual investment returns

The 50 public pension systems with the weakest investment returns in the 2024 fiscal year.

	Plan	Return
1	City of Austin Fire Fighters' Relief and Retirement Fund of Austin Texas	4.7%
2	Kansas City Public School Retirement System	5.2%
3	Educational Employees' Supplementary Retirement System of Fairfax County	5.68%
4	Oregon Public Employees Retirement System	5.8%
5	Omaha City Employees Retirement System	5.92%

Harding Was An Extremist Who Supported Banning Abortion With No Exceptions For Rape And Incest, And Praised Politicians Who Sought To Repeal The Affordable Care Act And Make Deep Cuts To Social Security And Medicare

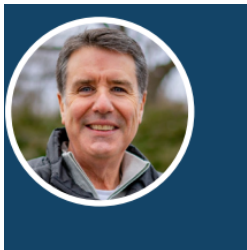
2021: Harding Supported Banning Abortion With No Exceptions For Rape Or Incest

2021: Harding Supported Banning Abortion From Conception With No Exceptions For Rape Or Incest

April 2021: Harding Indicated That He Supported “Legal Protection For The Life Of Every Preborn Child From The Moment Of Conception, Unless The Mother’s Life Is At Risk” In A 2021 Omaha City Candidate Survey. [Nebraska Family Alliance, 2021 Omaha City Candidate Survey, accessed [12/17/25](#)]



The graphic features a dark blue background with a white circle containing the 'nfa' logo. To the right, the text reads: '2021 OMAHA CITY CANDIDATE SURVEY' in large white letters, followed by 'Nebraska Family Alliance | www.NebraskaFamilyAlliance.org | Vote on Tuesday, May 11th' in smaller white text on a dark red horizontal bar. Below this, three questions are listed in white text: 'Question 1. PRO-LIFE: Legal protection for the life of every preborn child from the moment of conception, unless the mother's life is at risk', 'Question 2. RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: Protect churches, charities, businesses, and individuals from government discrimination due to religious or moral convictions', and 'Question 3. COMPREHENSIVE SEX ED: Teach young children about sex, sexual orientations, and gender identity spectrums in elementary schools'.



COUNCILMAN BRINKER HARDING (Republican)
Omaha City Council Candidate - District 6

- ★ Question 1. SUPPORT
- ★ Question 2. SUPPORT
- ★ Question 3. OPPOSE

Harding Touted The Endorsement Of Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer, Who Supported Repealing The ACA And Backed Extreme Reforms To Senior Benefits, Including Means-Testing And Raising The Retirement Age

Harding Touted The Endorsement Of Nebraska Senator Deb Fischer

The Denver Gazette: “Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) Endorsed Omaha City Councilman Brinker Harding In His Bid For Rep. Don Bacon’s (R-NE) Swing House Seat In 2026.” “Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) endorsed Omaha City Councilman Brinker Harding in his bid for Rep. Don Bacon’s (R-NE) swing House seat in 2026. Fischer’s backing signals the Republican establishment is behind Harding, the vice president of the Omaha City Council, in his pursuit to keep the seat red. Bacon announced he would not run for reelection, and he had just won his closest race in five campaign bids for the district.” [The Denver Gazette, [7/3/25](#)]

Harding Said He Was “Honored” To Receive “Massive Endorsements” Including From Senator Deb Fischer. “👑 ENDORSEMENT ALERT: I’m honored to earn these MASSIVE endorsements on DAY ONE! Together, we are building a winning, conservative coalition that will unite the GOP and deliver VICTORY in #NE02 next November!.” [@BrinkerHarding, Twitter, [7/1/25](#)]

← Post Reply ↻

 **Brinker Harding** @BrinkerHarding 🔄 ⋮

 **ENDORSEMENT ALERT:** I'm honored to earn these MASSIVE endorsements on DAY ONE! Together, we are building a winning, conservative coalition that will unite the GOP and deliver VICTORY in #NEO2 next November!



 **Brinker Harding** @BrinkerHarding · Jul 1

I'm a husband, father, businessman, and Omaha City Councilman. Today, I am announcing my run for Congress in NE-02 to make America more like its Heartland and to make the next 250 years a New Golden Age for America. I hope you'll join me!

...



0:08 / 1:34 🔊 🔍 📄 📌 📧

3:16 PM · Jul 1, 2025 · 4,266 Views

Senator Fischer Supported Repealing The Affordable Care Act Without A Federal Level Replacement

2012: Fischer Supported Repealing The Affordable Care Act

Fischer: “Yes, I Am Against Obamacare. I Want To Repeal Obamacare.” DEB FISCHER: “Yes, I am against Obamacare. I want to repeal Obamacare, and that certainly will be the way if I'm elected to the United States Senate. There are a number of things we need to look at, but I believe we need to take a step by step process. I don't believe we need this all encompassing piece of legislation that we're finding out is a tax. We're finding out new things that are in it all the time. What do you replace it with some common sense ideas here again, you know, I'm I'm very proud of our state, and I'm proud to be from Nebraska, because here we have caps on liability, and that helps, that helps to control those frivolous lawsuits, that keeps costs down. So we need to have tort reform that's important. We need to look at allowing people to get together, small businesses to get together and form some health care associations. They can do it now, but we need to allow them to do it easier. We need to make it easier for them, and we need to allow people to carry insurance across state lines. Let's be competitive. Let's see the market be competitive and offer us as consumers a good deal on health insurance. You know, this should be a discussion on affordability and accessibility to health care. We didn't have that before. That was not part of the debate, but that's what it should be.” [KETV (ABC),7:09, [7/17/12](#)] (VIDEO)

Fischer: “Obamacare Is An Overreach By The Federal Government That Needs To Be Repealed.” DEB FISCHER: “Obamacare is an overreach by the federal government that needs to be repealed. When it was passed, there was no debate on this issue. It's a major policy issue, and we had no discussion by the members of Congress on it.” [Tea Party Patriots Debate, 9:38, [4/07/12](#)] (VIDEO)

Fischer Claimed The Issue With Obamacare Was That It Was At The Federal Level

Fischer: “I Think The Question Needs To Be, Does The Federal Government Need To Replace Obamacare? [...] Does That Need To Happen At The Federal Level? That's The Problem We Have With Obamacare.”

DEB FISCHER: “I think the question needs to be, does the federal government need to replace Obamacare? We need to have the discussion and the debate on how to get affordable, accessible health care. Does that need to happen at the federal level? That's the problem we have with Obamacare. I agree that we need to have tort reform. We need to look at caring insurance across state lines. We need to also look at making it easier for health care associations to form, and we need to shift the discussion from a fee based service to a value based service, we have to look at finance, we have to look at delivery, and we have to look at outcomes with health insurance. As I travel the state of Nebraska and visit with insurance agents and visit with healthcare providers and hospital administrators and with people who can't get insurance. They want to have a discussion. They want to have a debate on what is truly needed here in this country” [Norfolk Daily News Debate, 21:08, [4/11/12](#)] (VIDEO)

2012: Senator Fischer Proposed Extreme Reforms To Social Security And Medicare Benefits Like Means Testing And Raising The Retirement Age

2012: Fischer Claimed Social Security Reforms Such As Means Testing And Raising The Eligibility Age Needed To Be Discussed For People 40 And Under

Fischer: “I Think We Need To Have The Discussion On People That Are 40 And Under And To Be Able To Change The [Social Security] System, Whether It's With Means Testing, Whether It's With The Eligibility Age, Those Need To Be Debated.”

DEB FISCHER: “Thank you. First and foremost, I believe that we must honor our commitments to our seniors. We need to honor those commitments that have been made these people have made their plans on those we must also honor that commitment to those that are approaching retirement age. We make plans as we age and how we're going to take care of ourselves and our retirement again. Nebraskans understand this issue. They understand that it's not sustainable the way it is. In fact, my husband and I would have this discussion when we were 40 and 45 and 50 and and we would say, if we don't have to put any more into this system, we promise never to take anything out. You know, we realize then that it's not sustainable. I think we need to have the discussion on people that are 40 and under and to be able to change the system, whether it's with means testing, whether it's with the eligibility age, those need to be debated so that these younger people can make their plans for their retirement also.” [Omaha World Herald Debate, 48:08, [5/01/12](#)] (VIDEO)

2011: Fischer Said She Would Consider Raising The Social Security Retirement Age

YNT Reporter: “Would You Consider Raising The Retirement Age Or The Cap, Which I Think Is Currently At 106,000 Social Security It's Around There. Are Those All On The Table, Solutions Like That?”

Fischer: “I Think Anything's On The Table.” DEB FISCHER: “But it has to be discussed. It's not sustainable the way it is, and I think as we must keep our commitment to the people who are in it. They made their plans for retirement based on what they believed they were going to be getting so we have to honor those commitments. But for the program as a whole to succeed, it has to be a conversation on, how do we make this sustainable? Because it certainly isn't the way it is.” YNT REPORTER: “Would you consider raising the retirement age or the cap, which I think is currently at 106,000 Social Security it's around there. Are those all on the table, solutions like that?” DEB FISCHER: “I think anything's on the table, you know, if it's, it's, if it's a reasonable proposal, they have to be debated. You know, that's, that's a problem we've had with Congress. Now, nothing's debated. Nothing's debated anymore. And if you're going to come together and truly work through a solution that's going to be sustainable for this country in the long term, instead of everybody like, say, kicking the can down the road, then you have to have a debate on it. You have to have that conversation.” [York News Times, 00:04, [8/16/11](#)] (VIDEO)

- **Fischer: “For The Program As A Whole To Succeed, It Has To Be A Conversation On, How Do We Make This Sustainable? Because It Certainly Isn't The Way It Is.”** DEB FISCHER: “But it has to be discussed. It's not sustainable the way it is, and I think as we must keep our commitment to the people who are in it. They made their plans for retirement based on what they believed they were going to be getting so we have to honor those commitments. But for the program as a whole to succeed, it has to be a conversation on,

how do we make this sustainable? Because it certainly isn't the way it is.” YNT REPORTER: “Would you consider raising the retirement age or the cap, which I think is currently at 106,000 Social Security it's around there. Are those all on the table, solutions like that?” DEB FISCHER: “I think anything's on the table, you know, if it's, it's, if it's a reasonable proposal, they have to be debated. You know, that's, that's a problem we've had with Congress. Now, nothing's debated. Nothing's debated anymore. And if you're going to come together and truly work through a solution that's going to be sustainable for this country in the long term, instead of everybody like, say, kicking the can down the road, then you have to have a debate on it. You have to have that conversation.” [York News Times, 00:04, [8/16/11](#)] (VIDEO)

2012: Fischer Proposed Means Testing And Raising The Retirement Age For People 40 And Younger As Reforms To Medicare

Asked About The Fiscal Solvency Of Medicare, Fischer Said “You Could Potentially Increase The Retirement Age And Do Means Testing For Those Who Are 40 And Younger.” MODERATOR: “Senator Fischer, much of rural America is dependent on Medicare, with its older population and small town hospitals. What is your proposal for dealing with the coming fiscal crisis in that program?” DEB FISCHER: “Let me be perfectly clear, I will not cut benefits for anyone over 40. We need to honor our commitment to our seniors and those who are approaching that age. We need to keep our promises to people. We need to have an adult conversation. We need to quit making this a political football, and we need to quit scaring seniors when we talk about Medicare and when we talk about Social Security. There's all sorts of ideas that are out there. For example, you could potentially increase the retirement age and do means testing for those who are 40 and younger. The important thing here is, is we have to be honest with people. Governments should be honest. Everybody in here, every one of us, know that these programs aren't sustainable. We have to change them.” [Nebraska State Fair Fischer-Kerrey Debate, 33:44, [8/26/12](#)] (VIDEO)

Harding Praised Senator Tim Scott, Who Proposed Raising The Retirement Age, As “One [Of] Our Country’s Finest Leaders”

Harding Called South Carolina Senator Tim Scott “A True Patriot And One [Of] Our Country’s Finest Leaders”

Harding On Tim Scott: “A True Patriot And One [Of] Our Country’s Finest Leaders.” “Rebecca and I enjoyed meeting Senator Tim Scott tonight—a true patriot and one [of] our country’s finest leaders.” [[@BrinkerHarding](#), Twitter, [8/22/25](#)]



Senator Scott Voted To Make Extreme Cuts To Medicare And Proposed Raising The Retirement Age

2015: Scott Voted To Make \$430 Billion In Unexplained Cuts To Medicare, As Part Of The FY 2016 Conference Report Budget Resolution. In May 2015, Scott voted for the FY 2016 conference report budget resolution which, according to the Congressional Conference Report, “The agreement proposes the same amount of Medicare savings reflected in the Senate-passed fiscal year 2016 budget as a target to extend the life of the Hospital Insurance trust fund and tasks the committees of jurisdiction in the House and Senate with determining the specific Medicare reforms needed to bring spending levels under current law in line with the budget.” According to Bloomberg, the Senate’s original budget, “avoided a plan to partially privatize Medicare that the U.S. House of Representatives embraced in its budget [and] instead call[ed] for \$430 billion in spending cuts without explaining where they would be made.” The vote was on the Conference Report; the Conference Report, which also passed the House, was passed by a vote of 51 to 48. [Senate Vote 171, [5/5/15](#); Conference Report, [4/29/15](#); Bloomberg, [3/27/15](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Con. Res. 11](#)]

2013: Scott Voted To Raise The Medicare Eligibility Age To 70 Over 20 Years, As Part Of Senator Rand Paul’s Proposed Budget. In March 2013, Tim Scott voted for raising the Medicare eligibility age to 70 over 20 years, as part of Sen. Rand Paul’s (R-KY) proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2013 to 2023. According to the Congressional Record, Paul’s budget resolution contained a policy statement that future “legislation must increase the age of eligibility gradually over 20 years, increasing the age from 65 to 70, resulting in a 3-month increase per year.” The vote was on an amendment to the Senate budget resolution replacing the entire budget with Paul’s proposed budget; the Senate rejected the amendment by a vote of 18 to 81. [Senate Vote 69, [3/22/13](#); Congressional Record, [3/21/13](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Amdt. 263](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Con. Res. 8](#)]

- **CBPP: Increasing Medicare Eligibility Age Would Leave Many 65- And 66-Year-Olds Uninsured.** “This means 65- and 66-year-olds would have neither Medicare nor access to health insurance exchanges in which they could buy coverage at an affordable price and receive subsidies to help them secure coverage if their incomes are low. This change would put many more 65- and 66-year-olds who don’t have employer coverage into the individual insurance market, where the premiums charged to people in this age group tend to be extremely high — thereby leaving many of them uninsured.” [Center on Budget Policy Priorities, [3/20/12](#)]

Scott Proposed Raising The Age Of Social Security Eligibility To 69 Or 70. “U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina said Wednesday he favors eventually raising the Social Security retirement age to 69 or 70 to make sure the program remains solvent. Scott, in an interview with editors and reporters at greenvilleonline.com, said gradually adjusting the full retirement age wouldn't apply to anyone now 55 or older. Adjusting the retirement age would give younger residents, such as himself, time to plan for retirement, said Scott, who is 47. ‘If you give people enough time, like a guy in his 40s, to retire at 69, that gives me 20 to 22 years to get to a place of retiring,’ Scott said.” [Greenville News, [3/28/13](http://www.greenvillenews.com/2013/03/28/3/28/13)]

Harding Was Bad For Public Safety, Voting Against Hiring Additional First Responders In Omaha And Against Common Sense Legislation That Could Get Guns Out Of The Hands Of Juveniles

2024: Harding Voted To Uphold The Veto Of A Budget Resolution That Would Add 18 Firefighters To Omaha’s Fire Department Against The Wishes Of The Omaha Professional Firefighters Union

Harding Voted To Uphold The Veto Of A Budget Resolution That Would Add 18 Firefighters To Omaha’s Fire Department

2024: Harding Voted To Uphold Mayor Jean Stothert’s Veto On A Budget Resolution To Add 18 Firefighters To Omaha’s Fire Department. “The City Council couldn’t find the votes Tuesday to overturn Mayor Jean Stothert’s veto on a budget resolution to add 18 firefighters. With Councilman Ron Hug absent at the weekly meeting, the vote ended up in a tie: 3-3. That wasn’t what Council President Pete Festersen was expecting; he told 6 News on Monday that he was confident the council would override it. Councilmembers Juanita Johnson, Don Rowe, and Brinker Harding voted ‘no’ on the motion to override. Johnson briefly inquired after the vote on whether her vote could be changed, but Festersen said there ‘wasn’t a mechanism for that,’ and noted that changing her vote would not have changed the outcome.” [Omaha World-Herald, [9/17/24](http://www.omaha.com/story/news/politics/2024/09/17/omaha-city-council-votes-3-3-to-override-mayor-jean-stothert-veto-on-firefighters/7061212002/)]

- **The Omaha City Council President Said The Omaha Fire Department Was In Need Of Additional Firefighters, Experiencing Increased Call Loads And Needed To Get A Rig Back In Service In Downtown Omaha.** “The City Council couldn’t find the votes Tuesday to overturn Mayor Jean Stothert’s veto on a budget resolution to add 18 firefighters. With Councilman Ron Hug absent at the weekly meeting, the vote ended up in a tie: 3-3. That wasn’t what Council President Pete Festersen was expecting; he told 6 News on Monday that he was confident the council would override it. [...] Festersen said he disagreed with that assessment, and said it didn’t look like the city was likely to secure a SAFER grant in 2024 as more than two-thirds of the monies have already been awarded, ‘and we haven’t heard anything.’ In 2022, the city missed the grant deadline. In 2023, Omaha didn’t get the grant. In the meantime, he said, the Omaha Fire Department is seeing increased call loads and needs to get a rig back in service in downtown — all reasons the city was hoping to get to 687 firefighters in 2025.” [Omaha World-Herald, [9/17/24](http://www.omaha.com/story/news/politics/2024/09/17/omaha-city-council-votes-3-3-to-override-mayor-jean-stothert-veto-on-firefighters/7061212002/)]

Omaha Professional Firefighters Union Supported Overturning The Veto

2024: The Omaha Professional Firefighters Union Asked City Council To Override Mayor Jean Stothert’s Veto. “Last week Mayor Jean Stothert vetoed a resolution that would ensure the Omaha Fire Department would have a big enough budget to 18 new firefighters. Tuesday, the Omaha Professional Firefighters union is asked city council to override her veto. The resolution was a collaborative effort between Council President Pete Festersen and the union. It states that if the fire department was not awarded the SAFER grant the city would find other revenue sources to supply the 1.2 million dollars needed for more staffing.” [KMTV, [9/17/24](http://www.kmtv.com/story/news/politics/2024/09/17/omaha-professional-firefighters-union-asked-city-council-to-override-mayor-jean-stothert-veto-on-firefighters/7061212002/)]

President Of The Omaha Professional Firefighters Union Trevor Towey: “We’re Going On Three Years Without Receiving The Funding [...] If We Want To Prioritize Public Safety In Omaha, Then It Has To Be In The Budget.” “We’re going on three years without receiving the funding, and it seems appropriate to us that

absent that funding, we would just put it in the budget if, if we want to prioritize public safety in Omaha, then it has to be in the budget or it doesn't happen.” [KMTV, 0:31, [9/17/24](#)] (VIDEO)

President Of The Omaha Professional Firefighters Union Trevor Towey: “Bottom Line Is We Need More Firefighters. My Message Has Been Consistent With That.” “Trevor Towey, president of the Omaha Professional Firefighters Union, reacted to the vote. ‘It sounds like there's some commitments from the city councilmembers that if we don't get the grant, they're going to offer that up. So although somewhat disappointed in this, I look forward with them. Bottom line is we need more firefighters. My message has been consistent with that. Whomever i need to work with to make that a reality next year and not two years from now, I'm going to do that,’ Towey said.” [KETV, [9/17/24](#)]

2023: Harding Voted Against Banning Ghost Gun Components, Which Allowed People To Buy Kits To Assemble Firearms At Home

2023: Harding Voted Against Banning Ghost Gun Components After Trying To Delay The Vote

2023: Harding Voted Against Banning Ghost Gun Components. “The Omaha City Council voted Tuesday to ban ghost gun components in Omaha, but postponed a vote on an ordinance that would have banned bump stocks and certain other accessories that make semi-automatic guns fire more rapidly [...] Council member Brinker Harding tried to delay a vote on the ghost gun ordinance and failed but was successful in postponing a vote on the bump stock ordinance. He said they needed more discussion and possible changes to make them comply with LB 77. Harding and fellow council members Aimee Melton and Don Rowe said the resolution supporting the mayor’s executive order would have no effect, an opinion also expressed by Kuhse. The ghost gun ordinance passed 4-3, as did the resolution supporting Stothert’s executive order. On both measures, Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Ron Hug voted yes, while Harding, Melton and Rowe voted no. The vote was unanimous on the gun safety resolution.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

Omaha World Herald: “Brinker Harding Tried To Delay A Vote On The Ghost Gun Ordinance And Failed.” “The Omaha City Council voted Tuesday to ban ghost gun components in Omaha, but postponed a vote on an ordinance that would have banned bump stocks and certain other accessories that make semi-automatic guns fire more rapidly [...] Council member Brinker Harding tried to delay a vote on the ghost gun ordinance and failed but was successful in postponing a vote on the bump stock ordinance. He said they needed more discussion and possible changes to make them comply with LB 77. Harding and fellow council members Aimee Melton and Don Rowe said the resolution supporting the mayor’s executive order would have no effect, an opinion also expressed by Kuhse. The ghost gun ordinance passed 4-3, as did the resolution supporting Stothert’s executive order. On both measures, Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Ron Hug voted yes, while Harding, Melton and Rowe voted no. The vote was unanimous on the gun safety resolution.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

Ghost Guns Were Kits That Allowed People To Buy And Assemble Firearms At Home, And Were Growing Increasingly Common In Omaha

Omaha World Herald: “Ghost Guns Are Kits That People Can Buy Online And Assemble Into Firearms.” “Ghost guns are kits that people can buy online and assemble into firearms. They don’t have serial numbers nor require background checks, or generate records transfers that allow guns to be traced. The ordinance passed Tuesday makes it illegal to possess the unfinished pieces or to manufacture a firearm from a ghost gun kit from a frame that does not have serial number.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: “[Ghost Guns] Don’t Have Serial Numbers Nor Require Background Checks, Or Generate Records Transfers That Allow Guns To Be Traced.”** “Ghost guns are kits that people can buy online and assemble into firearms. They don’t have serial numbers nor require background checks, or generate records transfers that allow guns to be traced. The ordinance passed Tuesday makes it illegal to possess the

unfinished pieces or to manufacture a firearm from a ghost gun kit from a frame that does not have serial number.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

Omaha World Herald: “Omaha Police Recovered Only Two Ghost Guns In 2019, But 46 In 2022, And 61 So Far This Year [2023].” “Schmaderer said Omaha police recovered only two ghost guns in 2019, but 46 in 2022, and 61 so far this year. ‘From 2019 to 2023, 132 ghost guns have been recovered in the City of Omaha,’ Schmaderer told the council. ‘Out of that 132, 65 were recovered from a juvenile or a minor.’ He said ghost guns have been used in crimes in Omaha, including the murder of a 20-year-old last year. ‘The City of Omaha has been harmed by ghost guns and the trend is on the rise,’ Schmaderer said. He also spoke in favor of the bump stock ban.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer Said 65 Of The Ghost Guns Found Were Recovered From A Juvenile Or A Minor.** “Schmaderer said Omaha police recovered only two ghost guns in 2019, but 46 in 2022, and 61 so far this year. ‘From 2019 to 2023, 132 ghost guns have been recovered in the City of Omaha,’ Schmaderer told the council. ‘Out of that 132, 65 were recovered from a juvenile or a minor.’ He said ghost guns have been used in crimes in Omaha, including the murder of a 20-year-old last year. ‘The City of Omaha has been harmed by ghost guns and the trend is on the rise,’ Schmaderer said. He also spoke in favor of the bump stock ban.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]
- **Omaha World Herald: “Ghost Guns Have Been Used In Crimes In Omaha, Including The Murder Of A 20-Year-Old Last Year [2022].”** “Schmaderer said Omaha police recovered only two ghost guns in 2019, but 46 in 2022, and 61 so far this year. ‘From 2019 to 2023, 132 ghost guns have been recovered in the City of Omaha,’ Schmaderer told the council. ‘Out of that 132, 65 were recovered from a juvenile or a minor.’ He said ghost guns have been used in crimes in Omaha, including the murder of a 20-year-old last year. ‘The City of Omaha has been harmed by ghost guns and the trend is on the rise,’ Schmaderer said. He also spoke in favor of the bump stock ban.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

2023: Harding Voted Against Supporting An Order To Prohibit The Carry Of Firearms On City-Owned Property Including Government Buildings, Parks, And Public Spaces

Harding Voted Against Supporting An Order To Prohibit The Carry Of Firearms On City-Owned Property Including Government Buildings, Parks, And Public Spaces

November 2023: Harding Voted Against A Resolution Supporting The Prohibition Of Firearm Carry On City-Owned Property. “The council also approved a resolution supporting Mayor Jean Stothert’s recently issued executive order prohibiting people from carrying firearms on city-owned property [...] The ghost gun ordinance passed 4-3, as did the resolution supporting Stothert’s executive order. On both measures, Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Ron Hug voted yes, while Harding, Melton and Rowe voted no. The vote was unanimous on the gun safety resolution.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

- **November 2023: The Omaha City Council Approved A Resolution Supporting The Mayor’s Executive Order Prohibiting People From Carrying Firearms On City-Owned Property.** “The council also approved a resolution supporting Mayor Jean Stothert’s recently issued executive order prohibiting people from carrying firearms on city-owned property [...] The ghost gun ordinance passed 4-3, as did the resolution supporting Stothert’s executive order. On both measures, Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Ron Hug voted yes, while Harding, Melton and Rowe voted no. The vote was unanimous on the gun safety resolution.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]
- **The Order Prohibited Firearms At Properties Owned, Leased Or Managed By The City Including Buildings, Parks, And Public Spaces.** “LB 77 took effect in September. It allows Nebraskans 21 and older to carry concealed firearms without a permit. The state legislation invalidates any local ordinances limiting that ability. Stothert, Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer and a majority of the Omaha City Council had opposed

LB 77. The mayor issued her executive order in late August. It prohibits firearms at properties owned, leased or managed by the city. Those properties include buildings, facilities, parks and public spaces.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

Harding Claimed The Resolution Supporting The Mayor’s Executive Order Would Have No Effect

Harding Said That The Resolution Supporting The Mayor’s Executive Order Would Have No Effect.

“Harding and fellow council members Aimee Melton and Don Rowe said the resolution supporting the mayor’s executive order would have no effect, an opinion also expressed by Kuhse. The ghost gun ordinance passed 4-3, as did the resolution supporting Stothert’s executive order. On both measures, Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Ron Hug voted yes, while Harding, Melton and Rowe voted no. The vote was unanimous on the gun safety resolution.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/1/23](#)]

Harding Was A Longtime Political Insider Who Started His First Job In Establishment Politics In 1994, And In City Hall Was Accused Of “Abus[ing]... City Resources For [His] Own Political Purposes”

1994: Harding Began His Career In Nebraska Politics And Omaha City Government More Than 30 Years Ago

1994: Harding Was Finance Director Of Hal Daub’s 1994 Mayoral Campaign

January 1995: “[Brinker Harding] Was Finance Director Of Daub's Mayoral Campaign.” “Harding, 33, was finance director of Daub's mayoral campaign. He has been on a leave of absence from his job as accounts manager at Data Processor International. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from UNO.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/4/95](#)]

- **Orlando Sentinel: In 1994 “Former U.S. Rep. Hal Daub Won A Runoff Election For Omaha Mayor.”** “Former U.S. Rep. Hal Daub won a runoff election for Omaha mayor Tuesday, resurrecting his political career. Daub, a Republican who left his House seat in 1988 and made two unsuccessful Senate bids, defeated City Council member Brenda Council, a Democrat who sought to become Omaha’s first black mayor.” [Orlando Sentinel, [12/15/94](#)]

1995-1996: Harding Was Appointed Assistant For Community Growth And Planning By Omaha Mayor Hal Daub

1995: Harding Was Appointed Assistant For Community Growth And Planning In Mayor Daub’s Staff

January 1995: Brinker Harding Was Appointed Assistant For Community Growth And Planning By Mayor Hal Daub. “Daub appointed LaVista Police Chief John Packett to be his link to police, fire and 911 as assistant to the mayor for public safety management. Daub also named three other assistants with similar duties involving other departments. The three other appointees are George L. Davis, assistant for public property management; Sherry L. Clure, assistant for personnel management; and Brinker Harding, assistant for community growth and planning. All four will join the mayor's staff Tuesday, the day after Daub is inaugurated.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/4/95](#)]

1996: Harding Received The Largest Salary Increase Of Any Official In The Omaha Mayoral Office, Resulting In Him Making Nearly Triple Nebraska’s Yearly Median Salary

August 1996: Harding Received A 24 Percent Raise Of \$12,500 To Increase His Yearly Salary To \$65,000 A Year. “Although Mayor Daub's proposed city budget shows sharp salary increases next year for some of his top advisers, those raises \$ 12,500 for Brinker Harding being the largest - were granted earlier this year. The salary

increases range from 8 percent for Chief of Staff Steve Kupka to 24 percent for Harding, the mayor's aide for economic development. Comparing salary figures in the 1996 city budget and Daub's proposed 1997 city budget make it appear that Daub is proposing the large salary increases for his top aides next year. Daub's proposed budget actually would increase the salaries of his top advisers only by about \$ 200 over what they're receiving now. That is because the salaries listed in the 1997 city budget were put into effect earlier this year, a fact that has come to light during the City Council's review of the mayor's proposed 1997 spending package.” [Omaha World Herald, [8/16/96](#)]

According To The Bureau Of Labor Statistics, The Average Pay For A Nebraska Worker In 1996 Was \$23,291.

Table 1. State average annual pay for 1995 and 1996 and percent change in pay for all covered workers 1/

State	Average annual pay		Percent change, 1995-96 3/
	1995	1996 2/	
UNITED STATES.....	\$ 27,846	\$ 28,945	3.9
Alabama.....	24,396	25,180	3.2
Alaska.....	32,685	32,461	-0.7
Arizona.....	25,324	26,387	4.2
Arkansas.....	21,590	22,294	3.3
California.....	30,717	31,773	3.4
Colorado.....	27,122	28,520	5.2
Connecticut.....	35,127	36,579	4.1
Delaware.....	29,123	30,711	5.5
District of Columbia.....	42,453	44,458	4.7
Florida.....	24,709	25,640	3.8
Georgia.....	26,308	27,488	4.5
Hawaii.....	26,977	27,363	1.4
Idaho.....	22,839	23,353	2.3
Illinois.....	30,101	31,285	3.9
Indiana.....	25,571	26,477	3.5
Iowa.....	22,875	23,679	3.5
Kansas.....	23,709	24,609	3.8
Kentucky.....	23,502	24,462	4.1
Louisiana.....	23,895	24,528	2.7
Maine.....	23,125	23,850	3.1
Maryland.....	29,143	30,293	3.9
Massachusetts.....	32,352	33,940	4.9
Michigan.....	30,545	31,522	3.2
Minnesota.....	27,363	28,869	5.5
Mississippi.....	21,120	21,822	3.3
Missouri.....	25,669	26,608	3.7
Montana.....	20,516	21,146	3.1
Nebraska.....	22,389	23,291	4.0

[Bureau Of Labor Statistics, [9/11/97](#)]

1998-2000: Harding Served As Mayor Hal Daub’s Chief Of Staff

January 1998: Harding Was Appointed Hal Daub’s Mayoral Chief Of Staff

January 1998: “Mayor Hal Daub Has Named Longtime Aide Brinker Harding To Replace Steve Kupka As His Chief Of Staff.” “Mayor Hal Daub has named longtime aide Brinker Harding to replace Steve Kupka as his chief of staff. Kupka is resigning at the end of this week to run for Congress. Coupled with the departure Monday of Joanne Robinson, the mayor's communications coordinator, Harding's resignation is the second major staff change this week. Robinson has taken a leave of absence to run Kupka's campaign.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/6/98](#)]

March 2000: Harding Resigned As Daub’s Chief Of Staff

January 2000: “Brinker Harding, Who Has Been An Assistant To Mayor Hal Daub For More Than Five Years, Will Resign As Chief Of Staff.” “Brinker Harding, who has been an assistant to Mayor Hal Daub for more than five years, will resign as chief of staff next month to take a job in the private sector. Bill Protexter, who was named Daub's economic-development aide in November, will become the mayor's chief of staff. Daub's office announced the staff change Monday evening. Harding will leave on April 7 to become a development consultant with Pacific Realty.” [Omaha World Herald, [3/28/00](#)]

2008-2009: Harding Served As Campaign Manager On Hal Daub’s Mayoral Campaign

November 2008: Brinker Harding Was Campaign Manager For Hal Daub’s Campaign For Mayor. “Daub, whom Fahey defeated in 2001, was interested in streetcars when he was mayor. His proposal, though, called for a trolley line running along 10th Street. Daub is focusing on his campaign now and reserving comment on the streetcar study, said his campaign manager, Brinker Harding. ‘I'm not sure Hal is going to be commenting on every vote the City Council does between now and April,’ Harding said.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/26/08](#)]

2013: Harding Was Named To The Omaha Planning Board After He Led Jean Stothert’s Mayoral Transition Team

2013: Harding Led Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert’s Transition Team

Omaha World Herald: “Harding Helped Direct Stothert's Transition Team After She Was Elected Mayor.” “Harding has worked for Colliers International since 2000. He served as Daub's chief of staff from 1998 to 2000 and was Daub's economic development director. More recently, Harding helped direct Stothert's transition team after she was elected mayor. Stothert nominated Harding to serve on the recently completed city charter convention, and he was selected as the chairman” [Omaha World Herald, [12/7/13](#)]

December 2013: Harding Was Nominated To The Omaha Planning Board By Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert

December 2013: Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert Nominated Harding To Serve On The Omaha Planning Board Through 2018. “A commercial real estate broker and chief of staff to former Mayor Hal Daub is set to be the next member of the Omaha Planning Board. Brinker Harding was nominated by Mayor Jean Stothert to fill the seat of Thomas Kelly, whose term ends Dec. 23. The Omaha City Council will vote on the nomination at its meeting Tuesday [...] If appointed, Harding would serve on the board through Dec. 22, 2018.” [Omaha World Herald, [12/7/13](#)]

2017-2025: Harding Was Elected To The Omaha City Council In 2017 And Reelected In 2025

Harding Was Elected To The Omaha City Council In 2017

Omaha World Herald: “Harding, A Commercial Real Estate Professional, Was Elected To The City Council In 2017.” “Harding, a commercial real estate professional, was elected to the City Council in 2017 and recently won reelection in an uncontested race. During his council campaign, he said his top priority is public safety, highlighting boosts to Police and Fire Department funding. He's also emphasized the value of private-public partnerships and touted development downtown and along the riverfront.” [Omaha World Herald, [7/1/25](#)]

Harding Reelected To The Omaha City Council in 2025

July 2025: Harding Was Reelected To The Omaha City Council In 2025. “Harding, a commercial real estate professional, was elected to the City Council in 2017 and recently won reelection in an uncontested race. During his council campaign, he said his top priority is public safety, highlighting boosts to Police and Fire Department funding. He's also emphasized the value of private-public partnerships and touted development downtown and along the riverfront.” [Omaha World Herald, [7/1/25](#)]

1997: Harding Was Accused Of “Abus[ing]... City Resources” For His “Own Political Purposes” When He Allegedly Used His Position As Omaha’s Acting Planning Director To Target A Mayoral Candidate Running Against His Boss, Mayor Hal Daub

1996-1997: Harding Took Over As Omaha’s Acting Planning Director Under Mayor Daub

January 1995: Brinker Harding Was Appointed Assistant For Community Growth And Planning By Mayor Hal Daub. “Daub appointed LaVista Police Chief John Packett to be his link to police, fire and 911 as assistant to the mayor for public safety management. Daub also named three other assistants with similar duties involving other departments. The three other appointees are George L. Davis, assistant for public property management; Sherry L. Clure, assistant for personnel management; and Brinker Harding, assistant for community growth and planning. All four will join the mayor's staff Tuesday, the day after Daub is inaugurated.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/4/95](#)]

November 1996: City Planning Director Jeff Johnson Resigned. “City Planning Director Jeff Johnson resigned Thursday over philosophical differences with Mayor Daub, an administration official said. ‘There are some differences of opinion on certain directions to go and the philosophies of how to get there,’ said Brinker Harding, the mayor's aide for economic development. Johnson, who became planning director in September 1995, could not be reached to comment. His resignation was effective immediately.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/14/96](#)]

November 1996: Harding Said He Would Coordinate Planning Department Activities In Place Of City Planning Director Jeff Johnson. “Johnson's replacement has not been named. Harding said he would coordinate Planning Department activities. He said the administration would conduct a national search for a new director.” [Omaha World Herald, [11/14/96](#)]

Harding’s Planning Department Acted On An Anonymous Report To Issue A Housing Code Violation Citation To Mayoral Candidate Brenda Council, Even Though The Assistant City Planning Director Called The Violations Minor And The Allegations Exaggerated

1997: City Councilwoman Brenda Council Was Running Against Hal Daub For Mayor

April 1997: Omaha City Councilwoman Brenda Council Was Running Against Mayor Daub In The 1997 General Election. “Mayoral candidate Brenda Council has been cited by the City Planning Department for housing code violations on a house she owns. Ms. Council said the action was politically motivated. ‘Here is an example of this administration's misuse, or abuse, of city resources for their own political purposes,’ Ms. Council said Tuesday. The city councilwoman is running against Mayor Daub in the May 13 general election. Brinker Harding, the city's acting planning director and a member of Daub's staff, said politics weren't at play. He said the city received a complaint about the house and investigated it through routine procedures. The department mailed a letter to Ms. Council Tuesday, notifying her of the citation, but she had not received it.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

April 1997: An Anonymous Caller Reported Code Violations Of A Property Owned By Brenda Council, Resulting In A Citation From The Planning Department

Omaha World Herald: According To Assistant City Planning Director Bob Peters, “An Anonymous Caller Telephoned The Mayor's Hotline On April 11 [...] The Caller Told The Hot Line Attendant That The Windows On The House Were Broken And That The Garage Was Falling Down.” “Bob Peters, assistant city planning director, and Ken Taylor, Omaha's chief housing inspector, called the violations minor [...] Peters said an anonymous caller telephoned the Mayor's Hotline on April 11 to complain about the house and garage at 2420 Pinkney St. A renter lives in the house, Ms. Council said. The caller told the hot line attendant that the windows on the house were broken and that the garage was falling down - allegations that were exaggerated, Peters said. Peters said the complaint was forwarded to the Planning Department, which is standard procedure when housing code complaints are called in to the hot line.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

- **According To Assistant City Planning Director Peters, The Caller's Reports Were Exaggerated.** "Peters said an anonymous caller telephoned the Mayor's Hotline on April 11 to complain about the house and garage at 2420 Pinkney St. A renter lives in the house, Ms. Council said. The caller told the hot line attendant that the windows on the house were broken and that the garage was falling down - allegations that were exaggerated, Peters said. Peters said the complaint was forwarded to the Planning Department, which is standard procedure when housing code complaints are called in to the hot line." [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]
- **The Assistant City Planning Director And The City's Chief Housing Inspector Called The Violations Minor.** "Bob Peters, assistant city planning director, and Ken Taylor, Omaha's chief housing inspector, called the violations minor [...] Peters said an anonymous caller telephoned the Mayor's Hotline on April 11 to complain about the house and garage at 2420 Pinkney St. A renter lives in the house, Ms. Council said. The caller told the hot line attendant that the windows on the house were broken and that the garage was falling down - allegations that were exaggerated, Peters said. Peters said the complaint was forwarded to the Planning Department, which is standard procedure when housing code complaints are called in to the hot line." [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

Omaha World Herald: "On April 22, Inspectors Visited The Property And Discovered Violations [...] Sections Of The Concrete Driveway Had Deteriorated, The Exterior Stucco Walls Of The House Were Cracked, And Gutters And Downspouts Needed To Be Installed." "On April 22, inspectors visited the property and discovered violations. The letter, written by inspectors, says Ms. Council needs to make repairs within 60 days. The letter cited problems with the wood siding and roof of the garage. It said sections of the concrete driveway had deteriorated, the exterior stucco walls of the house were cracked, and gutters and downspouts needed to be installed. It also said the garage and parts of the house needed to be repainted. Ms. Council said that before the house was inspected, she already had hired someone to install gutters and downspouts." [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

April 1997: Mayoral Candidate Brenda Council Was Cited By The City Planning Department For Housing Code Violations On A House She Owned. "Mayoral candidate Brenda Council has been cited by the City Planning Department for housing code violations on a house she owns. Ms. Council said the action was politically motivated. 'Here is an example of this administration's misuse, or abuse, of city resources for their own political purposes,' Ms. Council said Tuesday. The city councilwoman is running against Mayor Daub in the May 13 general election. Brinker Harding, the city's acting planning director and a member of Daub's staff, said politics weren't at play. He said the city received a complaint about the house and investigated it through routine procedures. The department mailed a letter to Ms. Council Tuesday, notifying her of the citation, but she had not received it." [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

Council Called The Action Politically Motivated And Specifically Called Out Harding's Role As Planning Director: "Here Is An Example Of This Administration's Misuse, Or Abuse, Of City Resources For Their Own Political Purposes"

Council Called The Citation By The Planning Department Politically Motivated

Omaha World Herald: "Ms. Council Said The Action Was Politically Motivated." "Mayoral candidate Brenda Council has been cited by the City Planning Department for housing code violations on a house she owns. Ms. Council said the action was politically motivated. 'Here is an example of this administration's misuse, or abuse, of city resources for their own political purposes,' Ms. Council said Tuesday. The city councilwoman is running against Mayor Daub in the May 13 general election. Brinker Harding, the city's acting planning director and a member of Daub's staff, said politics weren't at play. He said the city received a complaint about the house and investigated it through routine procedures. The department mailed a letter to Ms. Council Tuesday, notifying her of the citation, but she had not received it." [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: "Ms. Council Questioned The Planning Department's Priorities. Why, She Asked, Did They Choose To Inspect Her Property When So Many Others In The City Have Problems"**

That Are Far Worse?” “Ms. Council questioned the Planning Department's priorities. Why, she asked, did they choose to inspect her property when so many others in the city have problems that are far worse? ‘They themselves admit that there is a backlog of serious violations and that they have limited city resources,’ Ms. Council said. ‘This calls into question the management and the acting planning director, Brinker Harding, who has connections to the (Daub) campaign.’ She said she had owned the property for nearly 17 years and never had been cited for code violations.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: “[Council] Said She Had Owned The Property For Nearly 17 Years And Never Had Been Cited For Code Violations.”** “Ms. Council questioned the Planning Department's priorities. Why, she asked, did they choose to inspect her property when so many others in the city have problems that are far worse? ‘They themselves admit that there is a backlog of serious violations and that they have limited city resources,’ Ms. Council said. ‘This calls into question the management and the acting planning director, Brinker Harding, who has connections to the (Daub) campaign.’ She said she had owned the property for nearly 17 years and never had been cited for code violations.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

Council Called Out Harding’s Connection To The Daub Campaign And Role As Acting Planning Director

1997: Omaha Mayoral Candidate Councilwoman Brenda Council: “This Calls Into Question The Management And The Acting Planning Director, Brinker Harding, Who Has Connections To The (Daub) Campaign.” “Ms. Council questioned the Planning Department's priorities. Why, she asked, did they choose to inspect her property when so many others in the city have problems that are far worse? ‘They themselves admit that there is a backlog of serious violations and that they have limited city resources,’ Ms. Council said. ‘This calls into question the management and the acting planning director, Brinker Harding, who has connections to the (Daub) campaign.’ She said she had owned the property for nearly 17 years and never had been cited for code violations.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

1997: Omaha Mayoral Candidate Councilwoman Brenda Council: “Here Is An Example Of This Administration's Misuse, Or Abuse, Of City Resources For Their Own Political Purposes.” “Mayoral candidate Brenda Council has been cited by the City Planning Department for housing code violations on a house she owns. Ms. Council said the action was politically motivated. ‘Here is an example of this administration's misuse, or abuse, of city resources for their own political purposes,’ Ms. Council said Tuesday. The city councilwoman is running against Mayor Daub in the May 13 general election. Brinker Harding, the city's acting planning director and a member of Daub's staff, said politics weren't at play. He said the city received a complaint about the house and investigated it through routine procedures. The department mailed a letter [to](#) Ms. Council Tuesday, notifying her of the citation, but she had not received it.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

Harding Maintained That Politics Were Not At Play

Omaha World Herald: “Brinker Harding, The City's Acting Planning Director And A Member Of Daub's Staff, Said Politics Weren't At Play.” “Mayoral candidate Brenda Council has been cited by the City Planning Department for housing code violations on a house she owns. Ms. Council said the action was politically motivated. ‘Here is an example of this administration's misuse, or abuse, of city resources for their own political purposes,’ Ms. Council said Tuesday. The city councilwoman is running against Mayor Daub in the May 13 general election. Brinker Harding, the city's acting planning director and a member of Daub's staff, said politics weren't at play. He said the city received a complaint about the house and investigated it through routine procedures. The department mailed a letter to Ms. Council Tuesday, notifying her of the citation, but she had not received it.” [Omaha World Herald, [4/30/97](#)]

Harding Defended A Multi-Million Dollar City Contractor After They Were Found To Be Replacing Unionizing Employees With Undocumented Workers, Faced Investigations By The National Labor Relations Board And The Department Of Justice, And Faced More Than \$14,000 In OSHA Fines For Multiple Violations

1995-1997: Omaha Garbage Contractor Deffenbaugh Industries Faced Multiple Scandals Including Hiring Undocumented Workers To Replace Unionizing Employees, Investigations By The National Labor Relations Board And The Department Of Justice, And Fines By OSHA For Multiple Violations

1995: Omaha Entered A Seven Year, \$60 Million Contract With Garbage Collection Company Deffenbaugh Industries

Omaha World Herald: “[Deffenbaugh Industries] Took Over Omaha's Garbage Collection In September 1995.” “The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after, Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

1995: The City Of Omaha Entered A Seven-Year, \$60 Million Contract With Deffenbaugh. “Thus far, the mayor has declined to revisit the seven-year, \$60 million contract with Deffenbaugh, which began in 1995. ‘Until we let their ability to appeal [in the OSHA case run its course], or until a determination is made in the hiring case, we're going to proceed cautiously,’ Harding said. The turmoil has had little noticeable effect on service, he said. ‘They've been great service providers.’” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

1996: Deffenbaugh Industries’ Omaha Facility Was Raided By Federal Immigration Agents After They Employed More Than 70 Undocumented Workers To Replace Unionizing Employees

1995: Deffenbaugh Industries “Became Involved In A Dispute With The Teamsters Union,” Which Attempted To Unionize Company Workers. “The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after, Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Omaha World Herald: “About 70 Deffenbaugh Employees Who Want To Organize A Union Ended Up Walking Off The Job” In The Fall Of 1996. “The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after, Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Omaha World Herald: Deffenbaugh Hired “Replacement Workers” For 70 Unionizing Employees Who Walked Off The Job. “The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after,

Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force." [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

1996: Omaha World Herald: "In December, Federal Immigration Agents Raided Deffenbaugh's Facility At 16th Street And The Storz Expressway, Eventually Deporting More Than 75 Employees Who Weren't Legal U.S. Residents." "The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after, Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force." [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: "The Raid By The Immigration And Naturalization Service Forced Deffenbaugh To Replace Nearly Half Its Omaha Work Force."** "The company took over Omaha's garbage collection in September 1995. Soon after, Deffenbaugh became involved in a dispute with the Teamsters Union, which is trying to unionize company workers. About 70 Deffenbaugh employees who want to organize a union ended up walking off the job last fall, prompting Deffenbaugh to hire replacement workers. In December, federal immigration agents raided Deffenbaugh's facility at 16th Street and the Storz Expressway, eventually deporting more than 75 employees who weren't legal U.S. residents. The raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service forced Deffenbaugh to replace nearly half its Omaha work force." [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

1997: OSHA Fined Deffenbaugh Industries More Than \$14,000 For Five Alleged Violations, Including Forbidding Workers To Take Breaks

February 1997: Deffenbaugh Industries Inc Appealed \$14,400 In Proposed Fines By The US Occupational Safety & Health Administration After Being Accused Of Five Violations. "Deffenbaugh Industries Inc (Shawnee, KS) is currently appealing \$14,400 in proposed fines by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration. The company, which contracted to collect and dispose of Omaha's residential trash, is accused of five violations. These include providing little or no chance for drivers and helpers to use the bathroom. OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices." [Waste News, 2/3/97]

Waste News: One Of Deffenbaugh's Alleged Violations Was "Providing Little Or No Chance For Drivers And Helpers To Use The Bathroom." "Deffenbaugh Industries Inc (Shawnee, KS) is currently appealing \$14,400 in proposed fines by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration. The company, which contracted to collect and dispose of Omaha's residential trash, is accused of five violations. These include providing little or no chance for drivers and helpers to use the bathroom. OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices." [Waste News, 2/3/97]

Waste News: “OSHA Discovered That Some Workers Were Using The Back Of Compactors As Toilets Because [Deffenbaugh] Rules Forbade Them From Taking Breaks.” “Deffenbaugh Industries Inc (Shawnee, KS) is currently appealing \$14,400 in proposed fines by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration. The company, which contracted to collect and dispose of Omaha's residential trash, is accused of five violations. These include providing little or no chance for drivers and helpers to use the bathroom. OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices.” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

- **According To OSHA, Deffenbaugh Workers Using Trash Compactors As Toilets Was Both Unsanitary And Life Threatening To Workers.** “OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices.” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

Waste News: Deffenbaugh Industries Inc Alleged Violations Included “Poor Guarding On The Trucks' Hydraulic Systems, Poor Procedures Ensuring The Cutoff Of Power To Equipment While Being Maintained, Poor First-Aid Training For Workers And Inconsistent Use Of Reflective Vests By Employees Operating In Heavy Traffic.” “Deffenbaugh Industries Inc (Shawnee, KS) is currently appealing \$14,400 in proposed fines by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration. The company, which contracted to collect and dispose of Omaha's residential trash, is accused of five violations. These include providing little or no chance for drivers and helpers to use the bathroom. OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices.” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

November 1997: Deffenbaugh Industries Reached A Formal Settlement With OSHA Where The Company's Penalties Were Reduced From \$14,400 To \$4,700. [US Occupational Safety & Health Administration, accessed [12/16/25](#)]

Occupational Safety and Health Administration CONTACT US | FAQ | A TO Z INDEX | LANGUAGES

OSHA ▾ STANDARDS ▾ ENFORCEMENT ▾ TOPICS ▾ HELP AND RESOURCES ▾ NEWS ▾

Inspection Detail

Inspection: 116003906 - Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc.

Inspection Information - Office: Omaha Area Office

Inspection Nr: 116003906	Report ID: 0728900	Date Opened: 11/04/1996
Site Address: Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc. 5902 N. 16 Street Omaha, NE 68110	Union Status: NonUnion	SIC: 4953 NAICS: 0
Mailing Address: , , 00000		
Inspection Type: Complaint	Safety/Health: Safety	
Scope: Complete	Close Conference: 11/14/1996	
Advanced Notice: Y	Emphasis:	
Ownership: Private	Case Closed: 11/05/1997	

Related Activity

Type	Activity Nr	Safety	Health
Complaint	200050532	Yes	Yes

Violation Summary

Violations/Penalties	Serious	Willful	Repeat	Other	Unclass	Total
Initial Violations	5					5
Current Violations	3			1		4
Initial Penalty	\$14,400	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$14,400
Current Penalty	\$3,575	\$0	\$0	\$1,125	\$0	\$4,700
FTA Penalty	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Violation Items

#	Citation ID	Citation Type	Standard Cited	Issuance Date	Abatement Due Date	Current Penalty	Initial Penalty	FTA Penalty	Contest	Latest Event	Note
1.	01001	Serious	19100132 A	11/15/1996	08/12/1997	\$1,000	\$1,800	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	
2.	01002A	Other	19100141 C01 II	11/15/1996	08/12/1997	\$1,125	\$4,500	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	
3.	01002B	Serious	19100212 A01	11/15/1996	12/03/1996	\$0	\$0	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	Citation has been deleted.
4.	01003A	Serious	19100147 C04 II	11/15/1996	08/12/1997	\$1,000	\$1,800	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	
5.	01003B	Serious	19100147 C06 I	11/15/1996	08/12/1997	\$0	\$0	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	
6.	01004	Serious	19100151 B	11/15/1996	12/03/1996	\$3,150	\$3,150	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	Citation has been deleted.
7.	01005	Serious	5A0001	11/15/1996	08/12/1997	\$1,575	\$3,150	\$0	12/09/1996	F - Formal Settlement	

OSHA | Standards | Enforcement | Topics | Media Center | Contact Us

1997: The National Labor Relations Board Found Deffenbaugh Had Violated The National Labor Relations Act By Refusing To Bargain With Its Union

January 1997: Deffenbaugh Was Investigated By The National Labor Relations Board. “Councilman Paul Koneck accused the Mayor's Office of turning a blind eye to problems at Deffenbaugh. Besides problems with the INS, he said, Deffenbaugh has been investigated by OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. ‘There has been a flagrant attempt by the administration to ignore these allegations,’ Koneck said. Harding, Daub's aide for economic development, denied those charges, saying the administration has been following a U.S. Justice Department investigation into Deffenbaugh. The mayor, Harding said, supports Christensen's resolution and plans to submit a report to the council within the required 90 days.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

- **NLRB: “The National Labor Relations Board [...] Safeguard Employees' Rights To Organize And To Determine Whether To Have Unions As Their Bargaining Representative.”** “The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. The agency also acts to prevent and

remedy unfair labor practices committed by private sector employers and unions.” [National Labor Relations Board, accessed [12/2/25](#)]

- **NLRB: “The National Labor Relations Board [...] Acts To Prevent And Remedy Unfair Labor Practices Committed By Private Sector Employers And Unions.”** “The National Labor Relations Board is an independent federal agency vested with the power to safeguard employees' rights to organize and to determine whether to have unions as their bargaining representative. The agency also acts to prevent and remedy unfair labor practices committed by private sector employers and unions.” [National Labor Relations Board, accessed [12/2/25](#)]

U.S. Court Of Appeals For The Eighth Circuit: “The National Labor Relations Board Found That Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc. Had Committed Unfair Labor Practices By Refusing To Bargain With [...] The Collective Bargaining Representative Of Some Of Its Employees.” “The National Labor Relations Board found that Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc. had committed unfair labor practices by refusing to bargain with and furnish relevant information to the General Drivers & Helpers Union, Local No. 554, the collective bargaining representative of some of its employees. After the board issued an order requiring Deffenbaugh to bargain with the union, provide it necessary information, and post a notice to that effect, Deffenbaugh petitioned for review, requesting that the board's order be completely set aside. The board in turn filed a cross-application seeking enforcement of its order. We deny the petition and grant enforcement of the board's order.” [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc., Petitioner. VS National Labor Relations Board, et al., Filed [5/21/97](#)]

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit: “The Board's General Counsel Then Issued An Unfair Labor Practice Complaint, Alleging That Deffenbaugh's Refusal To Bargain Or To Provide Requested Relevant Bargaining Information Violated Sections 8(a) (1) And (a) (5) Of The National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 158(a) (1) And (a) (5).” “The board's general counsel then issued an unfair labor practice complaint, alleging that Deffenbaugh's refusal to bargain or to provide requested relevant bargaining information violated sections 8(a) (1) and (a) (5) of the National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 158(a) (1) and (a) (5). Deffenbaugh admitted the factual allegations, but asserted that it had not violated the Act because the union's certification was not valid.² The general counsel moved for summary judgment, and the board granted it, finding that Deffenbaugh had raised no new evidence or special circumstances requiring reexamination of the certification and that all of the certification issues had been or could have been litigated in the representation proceeding on the election. The board issued an order directing Deffenbaugh to cease refusing to bargain with the union, to furnish necessary and relevant information, to bargain upon request, and to post a remedial notice.” [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc., Petitioner. VS National Labor Relations Board, et al., Filed [5/21/97](#)]

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit: “Deffenbaugh Admitted The Factual Allegations, But Asserted That It Had Not Violated The Act Because The Union's Certification Was Not Valid.” “The board's general counsel then issued an unfair labor practice complaint, alleging that Deffenbaugh's refusal to bargain or to provide requested relevant bargaining information violated sections 8(a) (1) and (a) (5) of the National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. §§ 158(a) (1) and (a) (5). Deffenbaugh admitted the factual allegations, but asserted that it had not violated the Act because the union's certification was not valid.² The general counsel moved for summary judgment, and the board granted it, finding that Deffenbaugh had raised no new evidence or special circumstances requiring reexamination of the certification and that all of the certification issues had been or could have been litigated in the representation proceeding on the election. The board issued an order directing Deffenbaugh to cease refusing to bargain with the union, to furnish necessary and relevant information, to bargain upon request, and to post a remedial notice.” [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc., Petitioner. VS National Labor Relations Board, et al., Filed [5/21/97](#)]

U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit Ruled “Deffenbaugh Did Not Meet Its Burden Of Proving That What Occurred [...] For These Reasons We Deny The Petition And Grant Enforcement Of The Board's Order.” “A careful review of the record shows that Deffenbaugh did not meet its burden of proving that what occurred in this election made an expression of free choice impossible. Deffenbaugh has not shown that the election

environment was infused with coercion and intimidation. The board found, and Deffenbaugh does not contest, that there were no threats of physical violence and no vandalism or harassment in the pre-election period. Some statements about the INS were made, but far from the election date and not widely disseminated. Less weight is given to the impact of such statements [...] Since Deffenbaugh has not shown the union should not have been certified and it admitted it refused to bargain with it and provide relevant information, the petition for review must be denied. The remedy the board fashioned is not outside its discretion, see Millard, 2 F.3d at 261, and the board is therefore entitled to enforcement of its order. Earle Inds., 999 F.2d at 1272. For these reasons we deny the petition and grant enforcement of the board's order." [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc., Petitioner. VS National Labor Relations Board, et al., Filed [5/21/97](#)]

- **U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit “Since Deffenbaugh Has Not Shown The Union Should Not Have Been Certified And It Admitted It Refused To Bargain With It And Provide Relevant Information, The Petition For Review Must Be Denied. The Remedy The Board Fashioned Is Not Outside Its Discretion.”** “A careful review of the record shows that Deffenbaugh did not meet its burden of proving that what occurred in this election made an expression of free choice impossible. Deffenbaugh has not shown that the election environment was infused with coercion and intimidation. The board found, and Deffenbaugh does not contest, that there were no threats of physical violence and no vandalism or harassment in the pre-election period. Some statements about the INS were made, but far from the election date and not widely disseminated. Less weight is given to the impact of such statements [...] Since Deffenbaugh has not shown the union should not have been certified and it admitted it refused to bargain with it and provide relevant information, the petition for review must be denied. The remedy the board fashioned is not outside its discretion, see Millard, 2 F.3d at 261, and the board is therefore entitled to enforcement of its order. Earle Inds., 999 F.2d at 1272. For these reasons we deny the petition and grant enforcement of the board's order.” [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, Deffenbaugh Industries, Inc., Petitioner. VS National Labor Relations Board, et al., Filed [5/21/97](#)]

1997: Deffenbaugh Was Reportedly Under Federal Investigation By The U.S. Justice Department

January 1997: According To A Omaha City Councilman, Deffenbaugh Was Reportedly Under U.S. Justice Department Investigation. “Councilman Paul Koneck accused the Mayor's Office of turning a blind eye to problems at Deffenbaugh. Besides problems with the INS, he said, Deffenbaugh has been investigated by OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. ‘There has been a flagrant attempt by the administration to ignore these allegations,’ Koneck said. Harding, Daub's aide for economic development, denied those charges, saying the administration has been following a U.S. Justice Department investigation into Deffenbaugh. The mayor, Harding said, supports Christensen's resolution and plans to submit a report to the council within the required 90 days.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

February 1997: Waste News Reported That Deffenbaugh Was Being Investigated At The Federal Level For Its Hiring Practices. “Deffenbaugh Industries Inc (Shawnee, KS) is currently appealing \$14,400 in proposed fines by the US Occupational Safety & Health Administration. The company, which contracted to collect and dispose of Omaha's residential trash, is accused of five violations. These include providing little or no chance for drivers and helpers to use the bathroom. OSHA discovered that some workers were using the back of compactors as toilets because company rules forbade them from taking breaks. According to OSHA, not only was this unsanitary, it was also life threatening because of the potential for activating the compactor while a worker was back of the truck. Additional allegations against Deffenbaugh include: poor guarding on the trucks' hydraulic systems, poor procedures ensuring the cutoff of power to equipment while being maintained, poor first-aid training for workers and inconsistent use of reflective vests by employees operating in heavy traffic. Deffenbaugh also faces a federal investigation of its hiring practices.” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

1997: Harding Referred To Deffenbaugh As “Great Service Providers” And Defended The Administration’s Overseeing Of City Contracts
--

The Omaha City Council Ordered The Mayor's Office To Investigate Allegations Of Illegal Conduct By Deffenbaugh And Criticized The Administration For Turning A Blind Eye To Problems At The Company

January 1997: The Omaha City Council Passed A Resolution That Directed The Mayor's Office To Investigate Allegations Of Illegal Conduct By Deffenbaugh And Other City Contractors. “The discussion centered on a resolution introduced by Council Vice President Frank Christensen that directs the Mayor's Office to investigate allegations of illegal conduct by Deffenbaugh and other city contractors and to relay a written report to the council within 90 days. Council members voted 7-0 to approve the measure. Christensen said he introduced the resolution in response to growing concern from constituents regarding what the council plans to do about recent troubles at Deffenbaugh.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Omaha World Herald: “Council Member Brenda Council, Noting That The Mayor's Office Is Responsible For Overseeing All City Contracts, Said She Regretted Having To Take Official Action ‘To Get Done What's Supposed To Be Done.’” “Christensen said he worked with the Mayor's Office to draft his resolution using broad language that would allow investigations into other contractors. But the intent of the measure, he said, is to spur a Deffenbaugh investigation. Harding said repeated criticisms of Daub stemmed from a separate issue having to do with the effort to unionize Deffenbaugh. ‘Some people wanted to use this as an opportunity to voice their opinion on a particular city contractor,’ Harding said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Omaha World Herald: “Councilman Paul Koneck Accused The Mayor's Office Of Turning A Blind Eye To Problems At Deffenbaugh.” “Councilman Paul Koneck accused the Mayor's Office of turning a blind eye to problems at Deffenbaugh. Besides problems with the INS, he said, Deffenbaugh has been investigated by OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. ‘There has been a flagrant attempt by the administration to ignore these allegations,’ Koneck said. Harding, Daub's aide for economic development, denied those charges, saying the administration has been following a U.S. Justice Department investigation into Deffenbaugh. The mayor, Harding said, supports Christensen's resolution and plans to submit a report to the council within the required 90 days.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

- **Councilman Paul Koneck: “There Has Been A Flagrant Attempt By The Administration To Ignore These Allegations.”** “Councilman Paul Koneck accused the Mayor's Office of turning a blind eye to problems at Deffenbaugh. Besides problems with the INS, he said, Deffenbaugh has been investigated by OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. ‘There has been a flagrant attempt by the administration to ignore these allegations,’ Koneck said. Harding, Daub's aide for economic development, denied those charges, saying the administration has been following a U.S. Justice Department investigation into Deffenbaugh. The mayor, Harding said, supports Christensen's resolution and plans to submit a report to the council within the required 90 days.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Harding Defended The Omaha Mayor's Office Handling Of The Deffenbaugh Federal Investigations, And Seemed To Suggest The Criticism Was Connected To Unionization Efforts

Harding Denied Accusations That The Daub Administration Was Ignoring Issues At Deffenbaugh

Omaha World Herald: “Harding, Daub's Aide For Economic Development, Denied [Accusations That The Administration Was Turning A Blind Eye], Saying The Administration Has Been Following A U.S. Justice Department Investigation Into Deffenbaugh.” “Councilman Paul Koneck accused the Mayor's Office of turning a blind eye to problems at Deffenbaugh. Besides problems with the INS, he said, Deffenbaugh has been investigated by OSHA and the National Labor Relations Board. ‘There has been a flagrant attempt by the administration to ignore these allegations,’ Koneck said. Harding, Daub's aide for economic development, denied those charges, saying the administration has been following a U.S. Justice Department investigation into Deffenbaugh. The mayor, Harding said, supports Christensen's resolution and plans to submit a report to the council within the required 90 days.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

- **Omaha World Herald: “Harding Said The Mayor's Office Is Investigating The Company And Will Take Appropriate Action If Necessary [...] He Said The Mayor Isn't Ignoring Complaints.”** “Harding said the Mayor's Office is investigating the company and will take appropriate action if necessary. He said the mayor isn't ignoring complaints. Lamberty's statement followed the City Council's approval Tuesday of a resolution that directs the Mayor's Office to investigate allegations of illegal conduct by Deffenbaugh and other city contractors. The council wants a written report from the mayor within 90 days. Harding said the mayor didn't want to pass judgment until the allegations had been proved or disproved. ‘The City of Omaha under the Daub administration is not going to do business with someone who is violating the contract,’ he said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/16/97](#)]
- **Omaha World Herald: “Harding Said The Mayor Didn't Want To Pass Judgment Until The Allegations Had Been Proved Or Disproved.”** “Harding said the Mayor's Office is investigating the company and will take appropriate action if necessary. He said the mayor isn't ignoring complaints. Lamberty's statement followed the City Council's approval Tuesday of a resolution that directs the Mayor's Office to investigate allegations of illegal conduct by Deffenbaugh and other city contractors. The council wants a written report from the mayor within 90 days. Harding said the mayor didn't want to pass judgment until the allegations had been proved or disproved. ‘The City of Omaha under the Daub administration is not going to do business with someone who is violating the contract,’ he said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/16/97](#)]
- **Harding: “The City Of Omaha Under The Daub Administration Is Not Going To Do Business With Someone Who Is Violating The Contract.”** “Harding said the Mayor's Office is investigating the company and will take appropriate action if necessary. He said the mayor isn't ignoring complaints. Lamberty's statement followed the City Council's approval Tuesday of a resolution that directs the Mayor's Office to investigate allegations of illegal conduct by Deffenbaugh and other city contractors. The council wants a written report from the mayor within 90 days. Harding said the mayor didn't want to pass judgment until the allegations had been proved or disproved. ‘The City of Omaha under the Daub administration is not going to do business with someone who is violating the contract,’ he said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/16/97](#)]

Harding Seemed To Suggest That Criticism Of The Administration Was Connected To Unionization Efforts At Deffenbaugh

Omaha World Herald: “Harding Said Repeated Criticisms Of Daub Stemmed From A Separate Issue Having To Do With The Effort To Unionize Deffenbaugh.” “Christensen said he worked with the Mayor's Office to draft his resolution using broad language that would allow investigations into other contractors. But the intent of the measure, he said, is to spur a Deffenbaugh investigation. Harding said repeated criticisms of Daub stemmed from a separate issue having to do with the effort to unionize Deffenbaugh. ‘Some people wanted to use this as an opportunity to voice their opinion on a particular city contractor,’ Harding said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

Harding: “Some People Wanted To Use This As An Opportunity To Voice Their Opinion On A Particular City Contractor.” “Christensen said he worked with the Mayor's Office to draft his resolution using broad language that would allow investigations into other contractors. But the intent of the measure, he said, is to spur a Deffenbaugh investigation. Harding said repeated criticisms of Daub stemmed from a separate issue having to do with the effort to unionize Deffenbaugh. ‘Some people wanted to use this as an opportunity to voice their opinion on a particular city contractor,’ Harding said.” [Omaha World Herald, [1/15/97](#)]

February 1997: Harding Stood By Deffenbaugh Referring To Them As A “Great Service Providers”

Harding On Deffenbaugh: “The Turmoil Has Had Little Noticeable Effect On Service.” “Thus far, the mayor has declined to revisit the seven-year, \$60 million contract with Deffenbaugh, which began in 1995. ‘Until we let their ability to appeal [in the OSHA case run its course], or until a determination is made in the hiring case, we're going to proceed cautiously,’ Harding said. The turmoil has had little noticeable effect on service, he said. ‘They've been great service providers.’” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

Harding On Deffenbaugh: “They've Been Great Service Providers.” “Thus far, the mayor has declined to revisit the seven-year, \$60 million contract with Deffenbaugh, which began in 1995. ‘Until we let their ability to appeal [in the OSHA case run its course], or until a determination is made in the hiring case, we're going to proceed cautiously,’ Harding said. The turmoil has had little noticeable effect on service, he said. ‘They've been great service providers.’” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

February 1997: Waste News: Mayor Daub Declined To Revisit Or Cancel The Seven-Year, \$60 Million Contract With Deffenbaugh. “Thus far, the mayor has declined to revisit the seven-year, \$60 million contract with Deffenbaugh, which began in 1995. ‘Until we let their ability to appeal [in the OSHA case run its course], or until a determination is made in the hiring case, we're going to proceed cautiously,’ Harding said. The turmoil has had little noticeable effect on service, he said. ‘They've been great service providers.’” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

- **Harding On Deffenbaugh: “Until We Let Their Ability To Appeal [In The OSHA Case Run Its Course], Or Until A Determination Is Made In The Hiring Case, We're Going To Proceed Cautiously.”** “Thus far, the mayor has declined to revisit the seven-year, \$60 million contract with Deffenbaugh, which began in 1995. ‘Until we let their ability to appeal [in the OSHA case run its course], or until a determination is made in the hiring case, we're going to proceed cautiously,’ Harding said. The turmoil has had little noticeable effect on service, he said. ‘They've been great service providers.’” [Waste News, 2/3/97]

Affordable Housing

2022: Harding Voted Against Adopting An Action Plan To Address The Shortage Of Affordable Housing In Omaha

2022: Harding Voted Against Adopting An Action Plan To Address A Critical Shortage Of Affordable Homes For Middle- And Low-Income People In Omaha. “The Omaha City Council voted Tuesday to approve a Housing Affordability Action Plan, an ambitious set of recommended strategies for the council to consider adopting to address a critical shortage of affordable homes for middle- and low-income people in the city. The vote was 5-2. Council members Vinny Palermo, Pete Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Don Rowe voted yes. Council members Brinker Harding and Aimee Melton voted no. The plan includes recommended strategies, such as revising the city's zoning ordinances and reviewing rental programs; prioritizing funding for developments that include mixed-income, ‘missing Middle’ housing types; prohibiting discrimination against renters for their sources of income; and strengthening Omaha's rental property registration ordinance.” [Omaha World-Herald, [12/13/22](#)]

The Housing Affordability Action Plan Recommended Revising The City's Zoning Ordinances, Reviewing Rental Programs, Prioritizing Funding For Mixed-Income Developments, Prohibiting Discrimination Against Renters, And Strengthening The City’s Rental Property Registration Ordinance. “The Omaha City Council voted Tuesday to approve a Housing Affordability Action Plan, an ambitious set of recommended strategies for the council to consider adopting to address a critical shortage of affordable homes for middle- and low-income people in the city. The vote was 5-2. Council members Vinny Palermo, Pete Festersen, Juanita Johnson, Danny Begley and Don Rowe voted yes. Council members Brinker Harding and Aimee Melton voted no. The plan includes recommended strategies, such as revising the city's zoning ordinances and reviewing rental programs; prioritizing funding for developments that include mixed-income, ‘missing middle’ housing types; prohibiting discrimination against renters for their sources of income; and strengthening Omaha's rental property registration ordinance.” [Omaha World-Herald, [12/13/22](#)]

Environment & Energy

Harding Voted Against A Climate Action Plan To Reduce Omaha's Greenhouse Gas Emissions And Said The City Council Was “Under A Proverbial Gun” To Decide To Accept A \$1 Million Dollar EPA Grant

2023: Harding Voted Against The Development Of A Climate Action Plan

March 2023: Harding Voted Against The Development Of A Climate Action Plan. “By a slim margin, the Omaha City Council voted Tuesday to pay a Minnesota company \$376,000 to spearhead the creation of the city's climate action plan. After nearly 90 minutes of debate, the council voted 4-3 to hire the paleBLUEdot consulting firm to develop the plan, which was first proposed by Mayor Jean Stothert in October 2021. Under the terms of the contract, the Minnesota company will work with local engineering firm HDR [...] Council members Danny Begley and Vinny Palermo joined Johnson and Festersen in approving the contract. Councilman Don Rowe joined Harding and Melton in voting against.” [Omaha World-Herald, [3/8/23](#)]

2023: Harding Questioned The Council’s Decision To Accept A Million Dollar Grant From The EPA, Saying He Felt The Council Was “Under A Proverbial Gun” To Make A Decision

Harding Said That The City Council Was Under “A Proverbial Gun” To Decide On A \$1 Million Dollar Grant Environmental Protection Agency To Further The City's Climate Action Plan. “The Omaha City Council unanimously voted Tuesday to accept a \$1 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to further the city's climate action plan. But not every council member did so enthusiastically. Council members Brinker Harding and Aimee Melton, along with Don Rowe, voiced extensive questions and concerns about the grant and how the climate action plan fits into the city's other priorities. [...] With a deadline of Sept. 7 to respond to the EPA, Harding felt the council was under ‘a proverbial gun’ to make a decision, especially since the council doesn't meet next week.” [Omaha World-Herald, [8/29/23](#)]

- **The Million Dollar Grant Required Omaha To Create A Priority Climate Action Plan By March 1 That Would Identify And Analyze Emissions Data And Sources.** “Terms of the \$1 million grant, which is being funded by the federal Inflation Reduction Act, require the city to create a Priority Climate Action Plan by March 1 that will identify and analyze emissions data and sources, existing studies and community benefits. The grant also requires the city to create a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan by August 2025 that will identify actions and measurable goals to reduce emissions. A status report will also be required at the end of the grant period in 2027.” [Omaha World-Herald, [8/29/23](#)]

2024: Harding Voted Against A Climate Action Plan To Reduce The City’s Emissions And Increase Resilience To Extreme Weather And Flooding, And Called Some Of The Recommendations Objectionable And Counterproductive

December 2024: Harding Voted Against A Climate Action Plan To Reduce Omaha's Greenhouse Gas Emissions To Net Zero By 2050 And Make The City More Resilient To Such Effects Of Climate Change As More Frequent Floods And More Extreme Weather. “A climate action plan approved by the Omaha City Council this week aims to reduce Omaha's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and make the city more resilient to such effects of climate change as more frequent floods and more extreme weather. Net zero means adding no more greenhouse gases to the atmosphere than removed from the atmosphere. The plan includes an intermediate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 52% by 2035. [...] The council voted 5-2 Tuesday to pass an ordinance approving the Climate Action and Resilience Plan and making it part of Omaha's Master Plan. Council members Don Rowe, Juanita Johnson, Ron Hug and Danny Begley joined Festersen in voting yes. Council Vice President Aimee Melton and Council member Brinker Harding voted no after unsuccessfully pressing to delay the vote to take out portions they opposed.” [Omaha World-Herald, [12/21/24](#)]

- **Greater Omaha Chamber President Heath Mello Advocated For The Climate Action Plan Claiming It Would Create Economic Opportunity For Omaha.** “Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert first proposed creating

such a plan in 2021. Festersen has pressed for a plan for years. Cities must have climate action plans to begin to compete for some of the billions of dollars that the federal government has allotted in recent years for local climate projects. The State of Nebraska and City of Lincoln have adopted climate action plans. Greater Omaha Chamber President Heath Mello, saying that embracing the plan will create economic opportunity for Omaha, urged council approval along with leaders of a diverse collection of organizations. Those included the local chapters of The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Club, the Omaha Public Schools superintendent and Creighton University president and Omaha Students for Sustainability.” [Omaha World-Herald, [12/21/24](#)]

- **Omaha World-Herald: “Harding Said The Plan Would Create Unrealistic Expectations And Obligate The City To Take Actions That He Found Objectionable Or Counterproductive.”** “Omaha Mayor Jean A climate action plan approved by the Omaha City Council this week aims to reduce Omaha's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and make the city more resilient to such effects of climate change as more frequent floods and more extreme weather [...] Harding said the plan would create unrealistic expectations and obligate the city to take actions that he found objectionable or counterproductive. He cited several recommendations, such as establishing a curbside composting program, requiring new housing developments to have wiring capacity to charge electric vehicles and using tax-increment financing as incentives for actions that advance the plan's goals.” [Omaha World-Herald, [12/21/24](#)]

Omaha Budget

FY2018 Budget

Harding Voted Against Increased Funding For Omaha’s The Metro Area Planning Agency

August 2017: Harding Voted Against Resolution # 993 Which Increased Funding For The Metro Area Planning Agency (MAPA) In The 2018 Omaha City Budget By \$10,000. In August 2017 Harding voted against “Res. that, the Recommended 2018 Budget be revised by increasing appropriations in the General Fund in Other Budgetary Accounts – Misc., Community Service Programs, for MAPA by \$10,000.00, and by decreasing appropriations from the General Fund in Other Budgetary Accounts – Misc., Contingency Liability Expense, Contingency Account/Transfers by \$10,000.00.” The resolution was approved by a vote of 5-2. [Omaha City Council, [RES 993](#), [8/22/17](#)]

Harding Voted Against Increased Funding For Omaha’s Heartland Workforce Solutions’ Community Service Programs

August 2017: Harding Voted Against Resolution # 996, Which Increased Funding For Heartland Workforce Solutions’ Community Service Programs In The 2018 Omaha City Budget By \$20,000. In August 2017 Harding voted against “Res. that, the Recommended 2018 Budget be revised by increasing appropriations in the General Fund in Other Budgetary Accounts – Misc., Community Service Programs, for Heartland Workforce Solutions by \$20,000.00, and by decreasing appropriations from the General Fund in Other Budgetary Accounts – Misc., Contingency Liability Expense, Contingency Account/Transfers by \$20,000.00” The resolution was approved by a vote of 5-2. [Omaha City Council, [RES 996](#), [8/22/17](#)]

Unions And Workers’ Rights

2024: Harding Criticized The Kellogg Union Strike And Blamed The Strike For The Closure Of The Plant

Nebraska Examiner: “Harding Argued That Osborn's Union Work Strained Kellogg's And Contributed To The Company's Announcement That The Plant Will Close.” “Omaha City Councilman Brinker Harding, a Republican, credited Fischer's work on the bipartisan infrastructure bill that is helping bring \$3 billion back to

replace aging roads, bridges, broadband and airports, including Eppley Airfield. Harding argued that Osborn's union work strained Kellogg's and contributed to the company's announcement that the plant will close. The union has said its strike was not a factor in the closure and that it's still working to save jobs.” [Nebraska Examiner, [10/3/24](#)]

- **Nebraska Examiner: “The Union Has Said Its Strike Was Not A Factor In The Closure And That It's Still Working To Save Jobs.”** “Omaha City Councilman Brinker Harding, a Republican, credited Fischer's work on the bipartisan infrastructure bill that is helping bring \$3 billion back to replace aging roads, bridges, broadband and airports, including Eppley Airfield. Harding argued that Osborn's union work strained Kellogg's and contributed to the company's announcement that the plant will close. The union has said its strike was not a factor in the closure and that it's still working to save jobs.” [Nebraska Examiner, [10/3/24](#)]