



## From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

[www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov)

**For Release:**

September 23, 2016

**Contact:** Laura Strimple

402-471-8408

### **Nebraska students support cooperation with foreign nations**

LINCOLN – Presidential candidates are not the only ones offering their positions on foreign policy. Nebraska students have studied the issues and have their opinions as well.

Nearly 100 students from across the state, representing over 1,500 of their classmates, took part in the 18<sup>th</sup> Capitol Forum on America’s Future at the State Capitol, deliberating four different foreign policy options. Capitol Forum is sponsored by Humanities Nebraska and Secretary of State John Gale.

Nebraska students suggest that cooperation with other countries is the best option when resolving complicated issues like immigration, environment, terrorism, poverty and human rights. The highest ranked choice marked a departure from thinking on policy options by participating students. For the past several years, students have advocated shifting focus from global concerns, to those affecting citizens more directly at home.

The last time students opted for a cooperative approach was 2010. This year, more than half (51 percent) of participants choose cooperation. Concentrating on national concerns was the second choice (26 percent). At 19 percent, the third preference was one that stipulated taking whatever actions were necessary to keep the nation safe and strong. The least favored option (4 percent) called for the U.S. to serve as a beacon for democracy, utilizing the nation’s military if necessary, to do so.

The Capitol Forum program is integrated by participating teachers into their classroom curriculum. Teachers picked classroom representatives to attend the day-long event on March 21 and report back what they learned to classmates in

their home schools. Then, students voted on their choice of foreign policy and international issues.

In addition to ranking policy options, students also weighed in on specific concerns with regard to other nations. Top issues included: billions of people suffering from poverty, hunger and disease; biological and chemical weapons falling into the hands of terrorists; and, draining U.S. resources to solve the problems of other countries.

When asked about a plan of action to address issues and relations with other countries, the majority of students opted for negotiating strict international standards for dealing with climate change and other environmental threats. Previously, developing a policy to deal with immigration has been a key plan of action.

Capitol Forum is a Choices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century project, an outreach educational program of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies. In Nebraska, the program is funded in part by the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the State of Nebraska and NextGen Lincoln, a fund of the Lincoln Community Foundation.

For additional information visit the Capitol Forum page at:  
<http://humanitiesnebraska.org>.

###

### **List of Participating Schools & Students**

**Ashland-Greenwood High School:** Noah Marburger, Mari Crisler, Quinn Fricke, Dea Kaelan, Joe Aguirre

**Crawford High School:** Seth Oteken, Blair Stasinski, Nathaniel Nixon, Kortney Frazee, Cole Kleinlein

**Creighton Prep High School:** Hunter Parry, Eduardo Aguilar, Caleb Piti, Roscoe Ricketts

**Duchesne Academy:** Leah Johnson, Mia Thomas, Divya Nimmagadda, Lauren Stierman, Natalie Truscott

**Falls City High School:** Morgan Bletscher, Darcy Snethen, Josie Nolte, Jace Starner-Bents, Sydney Brewer

**Hampton High School:** Mason Lewis, Hailey Friesen, Alex Parks, Kristi Jelinek, Haley Schulze

**Hastings Senior High School:** Olivia Nicolarsen, Dakota Boydston, Andrew Moritz, Macie Clawson, Alex Kleinjan

**Hemingford High School:** Mikayla Randolph, Carli Cullan, Emily Hansen, Faith Rohrbouck

**Holdrege High School:** Alexandra Alber, Katie Reed, Brandon Schroeder, Jonathan Wagner, Jr

**Howells-Dodge High School:** Savanna Szabo, Tylinn Good, Luke Renter, Echo Bay Smith, Tyler Polacek

**Lincoln North Star:** McKenzie Peters, Bemnet Habtu, Kamryn Sannicks, Cinthia Cante, Lusamba Tshibengabo

**Louisville High School:** Kit Wilhelm, Cade Wolcott, Garrett Blatt, Jeni Michelle Leverage, Jonah Sayre

**Nebraska Lutheran High School:** Hannah Douglas, Clay Jackson, Bouk Peter Chuol, Brooke Malchow

**Norfolk Senior High School:** Finn Valle, Jessica Long, Brian Saravia, Shelby Miller, Chandler Brtek

**Platteview High School:** Jaren Bartels, Joe Romsa, Abbey Patera, Scott Strigenz, Tyler Matson

**Stanton Public Schools:** Ashton Flood, Paige Thelen, Broderick Sieh, Jorge Hernandez, Ashlin Rang

**Sterling High School:** Taylor Cockerill, Austin Buss, Marah Hestermann, Ericka Eckhardt

**West Holt High School:** Christa Wentworth, Kyle Linders, Caitlyn Nelson, Austyn Ramm-Lech, Avery Neptune

**Wilcox-Hildreth High School:** Jackson VanLaningham, Alec Ziebarth, Lance Aspegren, Skylar Halsted, Paige Twohig

**York High School:** Braydon Conell, Will Bailey, Samantha Redfern, Kirsten Wagner