

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS
2020 PRORAIL NEBRASKA
SURVEY OF NEBRASKA FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE
CANDIDATES AND OFFICEHOLDERS**

9/25/2020

Purpose, Scope and Design of Survey

The 2020 ProRail Nebraska Survey of Nebraska Federal and State Legislative Candidates and Officeholders (Survey) was intended to determine their interest and attitudes related to passenger rail.

Response forms for the Survey were distributed to 56 candidates and 26 current officeholders by mail on August 8, 2020. Recipients were asked to return the completed form by August 24, 2020 in the stamped envelope provided. 19 forms were returned.

The Survey included four opinion statements and one yes or no question. Additional comments were invited.

PRN PASSENGER RAIL OPINION SURVEY RESPONSE FORM

Circle "Agree" or "Disagree" for each of the following statements:

1. Nebraska should use state funds for planning and implementation of improved passenger rail service in the state. AGREE DISAGREE
2. Nebraska should immediately plan and eventually implement commuter rail service between Lincoln and Omaha. AGREE DISAGREE
3. Nebraska should support and help to implement an increase of the now once daily passenger rail service each way between Chicago, Omaha, Lincoln and Denver AGREE DISAGREE
4. Nebraska should rejoin the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact with the states of KS, ND, MN, MO, IL, MI and IN. AGREE DISAGREE

Circle "Yes" or "No" for the following question. If you circle yes, please give some details about your experience on the reverse of this form.

5. Have you ever traveled by passenger rail train? YES NO

Responses from Federal Legislative Candidates

12 candidates were surveyed and 5 forms were completed and returned as follows. Letter after name indicates political affiliation: D – Democratic, L – Libertarian.

U. S. Senate: **Chris Janicek** (D) agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

U. S. Congressional District 1: **Kate Bolz** (D) agreed with statements 1, 3 and 4 and with some limitations on statement 2 * and answered yes to question 5 with no comments; **Dennis Grace** (L) agreed with statements with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

U. S. Congressional District 2: **Kara Eastman** (D) agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

U. S. Congressional District 3: **Mark Ellsworth** (D) agreed with statement 2 and disagreed with statements 1, 3 and 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

* Bolz agreed with statement 2 after rewording "immediately plan and eventually implement" with "study opportunities for".

Responses from Federal Legislative Officeholders

1 officeholder was surveyed and no form was returned.

Continued on second page

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS *second page*

Responses from State Legislative Candidates

44 candidates were surveyed and 11 forms were completed and returned as follows. Letter indicates incumbent candidate – I. Candidates for Nebraska Unicameral Legislature are all listed as non-partisan.

District 1, Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson Counties: **Janet Palmtag** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 3, Bellevue: **Rick Holdcroft** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered no to question 5; **Carol Blood** (I) agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 11, Omaha: **Terrell McKinney** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered no to question 5; **Fred Conley** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 25, Lincoln: **Suzanne Geist** (I) agreed with statement 4 and disagreed with statements 1, 2, and 3 and answered no to question 5 and made comments; **Stephany Pleasant** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with no comments

District 31, Omaha: **Rich Pahls** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 35, Grand Island: **Dan Quick** (I) agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 39, Omaha: **Allison Heimes** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

District 49, Gretna: **Jen Day** agreed with statements 1 – 4 and answered yes to question 5 with comments

Responses from State Legislative Officeholders

25 officeholders were surveyed and 3 forms were completed and returned as follows. Senators in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature are all listed as non-partisan.

District 30, Lincoln: **Myron Dorn** agreed with statements 1, 3 and 4, disagreed with statement 2, answered no to question 5 with no comments.

District 32, Fillmore, Saline, Thayer, Jefferson and part of Lancaster Counties: **Tom Brandt**, agree with statement 3, disagree with statement 1, expressed no opinion on statements 2 and 4 and answered yes to question 5 with no comments

District 40, Rock, Boyd, Holt, Knox, Cedar, and Dixon Counties: **Tim Gragert** expressed no opinion on statements 1 – 4 and answered no to question 5 with no comments

Analysis of Candidate Responses

14 of the 16 responding candidates agreed with all the survey statements. 13 of the respondents had traveled by passenger rail train. It is safe to say that interest and support of passenger rail is closely related to experience with passenger rail. This realization and the very limited rail passenger service now available in Nebraska will continue to make difficult the passage of supportive rail passenger legislation in the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature.

Although ProRail Nebraska does not endorse any legislative candidates we do encourage voters on November 3rd to support candidates who gave positive responses to the opinions in this survey

*Summary and Analysis prepared by Bob Kuzelka, PRN Vice President, and approved by PRN Board.
Questions about the Survey should be directed to rkuzelka1@unl.edu.*