

## Nebraska aggies support Briese's LB314 for property tax reform

Written by  
Nebraska Farmers Union

A broad-based coalition of Nebraska ag and education groups is supporting legislation that would provide more than \$700 million in property tax relief while protecting essential public services such as education, services for the elderly, health care, highways and roads. Organizations in the coalition are each calling on their own members as well as all Nebraskans to show their support for real property tax relief by contacting state lawmakers in support of LB314.

LB314 is the result of two years of work by the Nebraskans United for Property Tax Reform and Education coalition and Albion Sen. Tom Briese to develop a responsible route to property tax relief.

LB314 would reduce the current over-reliance on property taxes and support K-12 education in Nebraska. It also adds \$468 million to the Property Tax Credit Fund – which would bring that direct property tax relief fund total to \$692 million. The bill also calls for a much-needed study to review the current system of funding K-12 education in Nebraska. LB314 would close several sales tax exemptions, add a surcharge to income over \$250,000, increase the state sales tax by half a cent, and increase the tax on cigarettes and alcohol.

Nebraskans United Coalition members comments regarding LB314:

"We appreciate Senator Briese introducing legislation that reduces the state's overreliance on property taxes and balances the tax system to fund education and other services." – Robert Johnston President, Nebraska Soybean Association.

"This is the only bill that provides real property tax relief, adequately and fairly funds education, and creates a more fair and balanced state tax system. We will be asking our members and we ask all Nebraskans to show their support for real property tax relief by participating in hearings, making phone calls, sending emails, and writing letters to their State Senators. The voice of citizens wanting real change must be heard." – John K. Hansen, president of the Nebraska Farmers Union.

"Any property tax solution which doesn't ensure the replacement of revenue for public schools is fiscally irresponsible. Senator Briese's LB 314 offers immediate solutions to address an unfair burden currently placed upon property owners." – Michael S. Dulaney, J.D., Ph.D., Executive Director of the Nebraska Council of School Administrators.

"LB 314 is long overdue legislation to correct the tax shift of funding education by property owners. As a locally elected school board member, there hasn't been one decision made by our board that didn't try to balance the needs of our students while being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers. LB 314 reflects this balance of fiscal responsibility by modernizing our tax code and generating the revenues needed to meet the state's obligation to support public education." – Dave Welsch, farmer and ag land owner, 20-year member of the Milford School Board, and member of the Center for Rural Affairs.

"This proposal will deliver property tax relief while still providing the children of Nebraska the high-quality education which will allow them to become the leaders of tomorrow. LB314 is the result of two years of hard work and study by a broad-based, bipartisan coalition and Sen. Briese. It will move Nebraska away from its over-reliance on property taxes and toward adequately funding education in the state." – Jenni Benson, president of the Nebraska State Education Association.

"LB314 will provide sorely needed relief for property owners, especially those in the ag sector. It provides for not only the reduction of property taxes, but also a method to pay for the recommended distribution of revenues. Almost all the revenue generated in the bill would come based on taxpayer use or on elimination of exemptions that have hampered the state's ability to generate revenues in the past several years. It pulls some of the focus away from property taxes which are fairly regressive. And

it would ensure that more state funding reaches ALL school districts in the state regardless of size or location." – Jack D. Moles, Executive Director, Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association

"This bill recognizes and honors the importance of both agriculture and education to Nebraska's economy. We support LB314 and its guiding principal that we need adequate and sustainable funding for high quality K-12 education because it is imperative for the future of Nebraska. It also provides a much-needed reduction in our over-reliance on local property taxes to ensure the tax system is fair to all Nebraska taxpayers." – Dr. Aaron Plas, Superintendent at Lakeview Community Schools on behalf of Schools Taking Action for Nebraska Children's Education (STANCE).

"LB 314 will also protect public safety and help reduce economic costs resulting from excessive drinking. Raising alcohol taxes for the first time since 2003 will lead to fewer alcohol-attributable deaths in our state from drunk driving, alcohol-related crimes and certain cancers. The bill will also help to reduce the \$1.2 billion in economic costs our state experiences each year." – Chris Wagner, Executive Director, Project Extra Mile

"The Nebraska State Grange commends Senator Briese and the Nebraskans United coalition for their dedication to finding a compromise solution to resolving the long-standing impasse surrounding REAL and long-lasting property tax relief. Politicians have perennially promised solutions but have always fallen far-short on delivery. LB 314 may not have all the answers, but it provides the Legislature with a very real opportunity to achieve permanent and substantial property tax relief without pulling the rug out from under our local schools and government subdivisions. We support LB 314." – Kevin Cooksley, Nebraska State Grange

"Sen. Briese understands how special education funding benefits all schools across the state and we appreciate his hard work and support." – Stephanie Summers, Nebraska Association of School Boards Legislation Committee member, David City Public Schools Board of Education.

–Nebraska Farmers Union