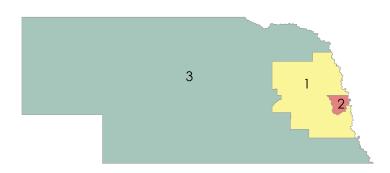
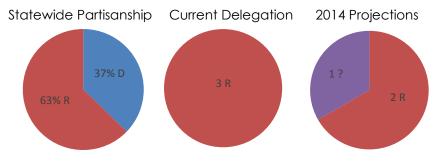
# **2014 ELECTIONS IN NEBRASKA**

July 2014

## **Current Congressional District Map**



## Representation



Partisanship is a measure of voters' underlying preference for Democrats or Republicans. See our Methodology section to learn how Partisanship is determined.

## **District Competitiveness**

Majority	Swing	Lean	Safe	
Partisanship	(50-<53%)	(53-<58%)	(58%+)	
Districts	0	1	2	

## Redistricting

Redistricting in Nebraska is initiated by a legislative subcommittee. Committee members come from the State Senate (the state's only legislative chamber) and are selected by the Legislature Executive Board.

Three potential maps were introduced in the first week of redistricting, two by Democrats and one by Republicans. The central difference in the maps was how they would break up Sarpy County, a heavily Republican county. The Republican plan ultimately won out, and western Sarpy County was moved into the 2<sup>nd</sup> District.

## 2014 Projections: 2 R, 1?

Republicans have monopolized Nebraska's U.S. House delegation since sweeping all three seats in 1994. Districts 1 and 3 are beyond the reach of Democrats, as they were both won by Republican incumbents by at least 35% in 2012. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> congressional district is potentially competitive - in 2008, Barack Obama had won an electoral vote by carrying the district. It voted less for Obama relative to his national average in 2012 than in 2008, giving it a new partisanship of 55% Republican, but incumbent Lee Terry won by only 1.6% in 2012.

Date 2014 Projections Announced: April 2013.

**2012 Projections:** 3 R, 0 D. All projections accurate.

Races to Watch: Terry (NE-2, R). Terry is a weak candidate, barely surviving in 2012 while underperforming his expected vote share by over 7%. However, the Republican partisanship of the district still makes Terry a favorite in 2014.

#### **Strongest Candidate:**

Fortenberry (NE-1, R): +5.1% POAC\*

Weakest Candidate: Terry (NE-2, R): -3.9% POAC

\*POAC (Performance Over Average Candidate) is a measure of the quality of a winning candidate's campaign. It compares how well a winner did relative to what would be projected for a generic candidate of the same party and incumbency status. See our Methodology section to learn how POAC is determined.

#### Race and Gender in the U.S. House

Nebraska has never elected an African American or Latino to the House. The state's three House districts are 88, 78, and 90 percent white, respectively. Virginia Smith is the only woman who has ever been elected to the House from Nebraska, representing the 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district from 1975 through 1991.

#### **Dubious Democracy**

Nebraska's Democracy Index Ranking: 30th (of 50)

Nebraska's mediocre ranking is hurt most by its failure to give any representation to Democrats, despite their making up well over a third of the state. The last Democrat from Nebraska to serve in the U.S. House was Peter Hoagland, who represented the state's second district from 1989 until his defeat in the "Republican Revolution" midterm elections of 1994.

The state fares little better in competitiveness, as two of its three seats were won by landslide margins in 2012. Only 37.5% of Nebraska's eligible voters are now represented by a candidate who they voted for in that election.



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Listed below are recent election results and 2014 election projections for Nebraska's three U.S. House districts. All metrics in this table are further explained in the Methodology section of this report.

**Partisanship** is an indicator of voters' underlying preference for Democrats or Republicans. It is determined by measuring how the district voted for president in 2012 relative to the presidential candidates' national averages. Developed by FairVote in 1997 and adapted by Charlie Cook for the Cook Partisan Voting Index, this definition of partisanship is based on only the most recent presidential election.

**Performance Over Average Candidate (POAC)** is an indicator of how well the winner did compared to a hypothetical generic candidate of the same district, incumbency status, and party, based on their winning percentages in 2010 and 2012. A high POAC suggests that the winner appealed to independents and voters from other parties in addition to voters from his or her own party. A low POAC suggests that the winner did not draw many votes from independents and other parties.

District	Incumbent	Party	Race/ Gender	Year First Elected	2012 2-Party Winning Percentage		District Partisanship (Dem)	2014 Projected Dem %	2014 Projection
1	Fortenberry, Jeff	R	White/M	2004	68.3%	5.1%	40.1%	31.8%	Safe R
2	Terry, Lee	R	White/M	1998	50.8%	-3.9%	44.6%	44.6%	No Projection
3	Smith, Adrian	R	White/M	2006	74.2%	-1.5%	27.1%	24.5%	Safe R

## Nebraska's Fair Representation Voting Plan

Super District (w/current		Pop. Per	% to Win	Partisanship	Current	Super District
Cong. Dist. #s)	# of Seats	Seat	(plus one vote)	(D/R %)	Rep.: 3R	Rep.: 2 R, 1 D
A (CDs - 1,2,3)	3	608,780	25%	37 / 63	3 R	2 R, 1 D



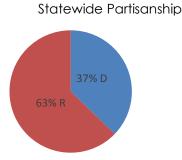
Partisan and Racial Impact: This fair voting plan would provide fair representation to Democrats in Nebraska, ensuring that they have the voting power to win one of three seats in a state where they make up over a third of the population. Under this plan, voters would have a greater variety of choices within the major parties as well as between them. Racial minorities are well below the threshold necessary to win a seat in Nebraska, but could join with white voters to elect a preferred candidate.

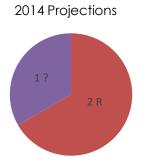
## **How Does Fair Representation Voting Work?**

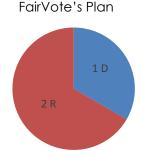
Fair representation voting methods such as ranked choice voting describe American forms of proportional representation with a history in local and state elections. They uphold American electoral traditions, such as voting for candidates rather than parties. They ensure all voters participate in competitive elections and ensure more accurate representation, with the majority of voters likely to elect most seats and backers of both major parties likely to elect preferred candidates.

Instead of three individual congressional districts, our fair voting plan combines these districts into one larger "super district." Any candidate who is the first choice of more than a quarter of voters in a three-seat district will win a seat.

## Comparing a Fair Representation Voting Plan to Nebraska's Current Districts







Partisanship is an indicator of voters' underlying preference for Democrats or Republicans. See our Methodology section to learn how Partisanship is determined.

## Benefits of a Fair Representation Voting Plan

**More accurate representation:** Congressional delegations more faithfully reflect the preferences of all voters. Supporters of both major parties elect candidates in each district, with accurate balance of each district's left, right, and center.

**More voter choice and competition:** Third parties, independents and major party innovators have better chances, as there is a lower threshold for candidates to win a seat. Because voters have a range of choices, candidates must compete to win voter support.

**Better representation of racial minorities:** Racial minority candidates have a lower threshold to earn seats, even when not geographically concentrated. More voters of all races are in a position to elect candidates.

*More women*: More women are likely to run and win. Single-member districts often stifle potential candidates.