



NEBRASKA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

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N E W S R E L E A S E

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U.S. lawmakers to participate in Capitol Forum

LINCOLN—All five members of Nebraska's congressional delegation plan to participate in the 11th annual Nebraska Capitol Forum on America's Future on March 30 at the State Capitol.

U.S. Sens. Ben Nelson and Mike Johanns and U.S. Reps. Jeff Fortenberry, Lee Terry and Adrian Smith will participate via video conferencing from Washington, D.C.

The delegation will answer foreign policy questions from a group of 90 high school students as part of a daylong forum in which the students discuss the U.S. role in today's world. The forum is a collaboration of the Nebraska Humanities Council and Secretary of State John Gale. The students and their teachers will represent 21 high schools in Lincoln, Omaha, Ashland, Bellevue, Cairo, Dodge, Falls City, Genoa, Hampton, Hastings, Hemingford, Holdrege, Howells, Norfolk, North Platte, Springfield, Stella, Sterling, Sumner and Wilcox.

Capitol Forum is a civic education initiative designed to give high school students a voice in public policy. For six months, students have studied and deliberated foreign policy issues in the classroom. On March 30, student representatives from each school will engage in discussion among themselves and with policymakers on such issues as immigration, nuclear weapon proliferation, terrorism, international trade, and the global environment. They will deliberate on four distinct options for the future of U.S. foreign policy, culminating in a conversation with members of Nebraska's congressional delegation.

The day begins at 8:30 a.m. with a welcome by Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy in the Warner Chamber. Deliberation on the four futures begins at 1:25 p.m. The students' conversation with the congressional delegation is scheduled for 2:45 p.m.

After the March 30 forum, teachers and students will return home to share their experiences with classmates, broadening the impact of Capitol Forum to more than 1,200 students statewide. These classes will complete a ballot describing their view of America's future role in the world. Results of the ballot will be compiled and distributed to elected officials, Nebraska schools and news media.

Capitol Forum is a Choices for the 21st Century project, an outreach educational program of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies.

In Nebraska, Capitol Forum is funded in part by the Cooper Foundation, A to Z Printing, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and a state appropriation by the Nebraska Legislature.

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Editors: For an interview with Secretary of State John Gale, call (402) 471-1572. News media are welcome to attend all sessions of Capitol Forum. For details on the day's agenda, call Erika Hamilton, NHC program officer, at (402) 474-2131, ext. 104.