



**From the Office of Secretary of State**

**John A. Gale**

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**Nebraska students choose best foreign policies for U.S.**

LINCOLN -- The most appropriate foreign relations policy for the United States is one that focuses on protecting the homeland and places less importance on international involvement. That was the top option selected by more than 80 Nebraska high school students who took part in the 17<sup>th</sup> Capitol Forum on America's Future. Capitol Forum is co-sponsored by the office of Secretary of State John Gale and Humanities Nebraska, a statewide nonprofit organization.

Students have been surprisingly consistent in their choices over the past few years. Since 2012, they have ranked the same policy options in the same order, leading with one that is decidedly more isolationist than the others.

Putting key U.S. issues like unemployment, the economy, health care, education and homeland security above foreign interests appealed to 42 percent of respondents. Thirty-one percent of students said they thought a more appropriate policy was one in which the U.S. worked cooperatively with other nations to resolve global issues like poverty, human rights and terrorism.

At 24 percent, the third choice selected was one that stipulates taking whatever actions are necessary to keep the nation safe and strong. Allowing the U.S. to dictate international policies and using military force to address threats was the least preferred option.

More than 80 students from 21 high schools took part in Capitol Forum at the State Capitol on March 23 to deliberate the four foreign policy options. Those options are

studied and debated in the context of various topics including: terrorism, immigration, environment, international trade and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

When ranking their concerns with relation to foreign countries, students indicated their chief fear was that nuclear, biological and chemical weapons could end up in the hands of terrorists. They also expressed concern that more U.S. citizens would die at the hands of terrorists and that the nation would use up its resources trying to solve the problems of other countries.

In developing an action plan to help address issues and relationships with other countries, once again, students strongly agreed with a policy that would reduce the number of accepted immigrants and crack down on illegal immigration. That course of action has been the top choice among participating students since 2009. Students also strongly agreed with taking whatever steps necessary to remain a military superpower and help implement strict international standards for addressing climate change and other environmental threats.

As part of their participation, students study the issues presented in Capitol Forum prior to attending the daylong event at the State Capitol. Afterward, students return to their schools to share the results with their classmates.

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 Cooper Foundation and the State of Nebraska.

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

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

**Arlington High School:** Payton Cooley, Brad Ernesti, Brook Hoelsing, Seth McRobert and Jason Wiese (teacher)

**Ashland-Greenwood High School:** Tyler Craven, Blake Dvarishkis, Jeb Vavak, Alex Degarmo and Brian Petermann (teacher)

**Auburn High School:** Blake Parker, Ian Miller, Jack Kudma, Timber Towne and Bryce Roth (teacher)

**Bellevue West High School:** Joe Hart, Katie Carlson, Thomas Culver, Chance Guida and Brenna Dacey (teacher)

**Crawford High School:** Darin Lemmon, Caiden Lemmon, Nate Nixon, Paige Parkins and Mary Gould-Traphagan (teacher)

**Duchesne Academy:** Kari Fossum, Olivia Youngblood, Cate Longo, Emily Anthonie and Heidi Reinhart (teacher)

**Hampton High School:** Paige Hahn, Cami Roehrs, Trevin Sebek, Brittany Dose and Patrick Alexander (teacher)

**Hastings High School:** Sam Roth, Ryder Mays, Zach Evans, Rachel Roberts and Robert Kerr (teacher)

**Hemingford High School:** Brittany Thomas, Cody Laursen, Taeller Ansley, Mathew Davis and Dave Chatelain (teacher)

**Holdrege High School:** Andrea Exstrom, Maggie Gardner, Jenna Gillespie, Kimberly Jurado and Chad Bailey (teacher)

**Howells-Dodge High School:** Hunter Nathan, Abby Coday, Faith Molacek, Aaron Harter and Scott Polacek (teacher)

**Lincoln North Star High School:** Claire Bartels, David Nguyen, Alex Stogdill, Zainab Saleh and Jace Ahlberg (teacher)

**Louisville High School:** Trenton Warner, Nina Hjermsstad, Samuel Rose, Nathan Minchow and Nicholas Bausch (teacher)

**Nebraska Lutheran High School:** Kueny Thiluang, Ashleigh Lee, Benjamin Helwig, Kelby Hopwood and Maggie Rasmussen (teacher)

**Norfolk Senior High School:** Kaitlin Strong, Trevor McKeown, Kaytlin Epperly, Jestin Casas and Katherine Steinkamp (teacher)

**North Platte High School:** Jacob Prevenas, Jesse Uppal, Alex Rouch, Chris Smith, and Dennis Fornander (teacher)

**Platteview High School:** Crystian Neaman, Sam Keyes, Raelyn Haubensak, Maria Brady and Jon Comine (teacher)

**Stanton High School:** Madison Kleinschmit, Ariel Zach, Trenton Cadwallader, Logan McKeon and Jacob Blum (teacher)

**Sterling High School:** Hannah Jasa, Erika Goracke, Megan Barber, Tanner Shea and Arlo Wusk (teacher)

**West Holt High School:** Jacob Lee Tasler, Aaron Johnson, Viktor Jonseth, Josiah McAllister and Chris Nemetz (teacher)

**Wilcox-Hildreth High School:** Sarah Arehart, Camryn Preston, Matthew Hinrichs, Alex Voichoskie and Ken Meyers (teacher)

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