

# ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE PEOPLE OF NEBRASKA'S SECOND DISTRICT



## CONGRESSMAN BRAD ASHFORD

Independent leadership to grow our  
economy, keep our promises to veterans,  
and secure our nation from terrorism.

It has been my honor to serve the people of Nebraska's Second District over the past year. I look forward to another year of service and action on behalf of the people of Douglas and Sarpy County. Please feel free to use this annual report to learn more about my first year in office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. R. Schaefer", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

# CONGRESSMAN ASHFORD BY THE NUMBERS

81.8%

OF COSPONSORED  
BILLS ARE  
BIPARTISAN

4

BILLS INTRODUCED  
INCLUDING THE  
KERRIE OROZCO ACT

34

BILLS  
COSPONSORED TO  
BENEFIT VETERANS

24

ROUNDTABLES  
HELD

45

MEETINGS  
WITH VETERANS  
ORGANIZATIONS

27

LARGEST  
EMPLOYERS  
VISITED

358

FEDERAL ISSUES  
RESOLVED

44

MOBILE OFFICES  
HELD

39,516

RESPONSE LETTERS  
TO CONSTITUENTS

# BIPARTISANSHIP AND REFORMING CONGRESS



# **BRAD IS BRINGING NEBRASKA INDEPENDENCE TO CONGRESS TO GET THINGS DONE AND CRACK DOWN ON SPECIAL PRIVILEGES FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.**



## **Brad Ashford's Kindness Campaign**

“If you were to picture the opposite of the U.S. House of Representatives, you might come up with something a lot like the Nebraska state Legislature. It’s the smallest one in the country (only 49 members), unicameral (a Senate, but no House), and unlike every other state’s legislative branch nonpartisan.”

## **Norris’ bipartisan model shows right way to govern**

“There are times when we must look to the actions of the past for a call to action for the future. In 1934, U.S. Sen. George Norris missed the opening of the 75th session of Congress in order to preside over the inaugural meeting of what he termed “the Nebraska Experiment” — the unicameral Legislature.”

## **Ashford: Let’s do a Bipartisan Fix Now**

“The Republican members of Nebraska’s Congressional delegation expressed dismay Thursday about the survival of the Affordable Care Act while Democratic Rep. Brad Ashford suggested Congress should engage now in a bipartisan effort to improve the law.”

## **Congressman Ashford proposes Nebraska solution to Washington partisanship**

“Congressman Brad Ashford announced Wednesday that he is proposing an amendment to the rules of the House of Representatives, aimed at reducing partisan influence in the legislative body.”

## **Rep. Ashford to introduce proposal that all bills receive 10+ hours of floor debate**

“Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb., wants House members to talk more. A lot more. Omaha’s congressman plans to introduce a proposal Tuesday that would require all bills to receive at least 10 hours of debate on the House floor before a final vote.”

## **Brad Ashford Calls for End to Lawmakers Sending Tax-Payer Funded Mailings**

“Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb., wants to cut off the mass mailings sent from Capitol Hill lawmakers every year on the taxpayers’ dime.”

# WORKING TO GROW OUR LOCAL ECONOMY



**AS A FORMER SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, BRAD KNOWS WE CAN GROW OUR LOCAL ECONOMY BY REDUCING UNFAIR BURDENS ON SMALL BUSINESS, TRAINING MORE SKILLED WORKERS, AND SUPPORTING ROBUST TRADE POLICIES.**



#### **[US Trade Rep. Visits Omaha Farm Wednesday](#)**

“Froman and Rep. Brad Ashford met with farm organizations on the Ueberrhein's family farm. Rick Ueberrhein said that farmers generally will do whatever they can to grow their business all over the world.”

#### **[Ashford Says Infrastructure Crumbles While Congress Kicks Cans](#)**

“Nebraska Congressman Brad Ashford says not enough is happening to our roads. He says the transportation bill should be at the top of the list when members of Congress return from their five-week vacation.”

#### **[World Herald Editorial: Skilled Jobs Need Workers](#)**

“At the federal level, U.S. Rep. Brad Ashford of Omaha and a California congressman have introduced legislation that would provide competitive grants to promote advanced skills training for manufacturing.”

#### **[Highway Bill Clears Congress in “Big Victory for Nebraska”](#)**

“Road and infrastructure work has been running on fumes with one irresponsible short-term patch after another,” Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb., said in a statement after the vote. “This legislation will help heal the hundreds of Nebraska bridges that need repair...”

#### **[Ashford Continues Focus on Growing Nebraska’s Economy](#)**

“During the final week of Congress’ August recess, Rep. Brad Ashford will continue to focus on growing Nebraska’s economy by seeking out a variety of viewpoints in the coming days with a series of roundtable discussions and hands-on meetings with Nebraska businesses.”

#### **[Ashford Signs on to Young Farmer Success Act](#)**

“Farmers feed America,” said Ashford, a member of the House Agriculture Committee. “If that’s not public service, I’m not sure what is. Only six percent of our country’s farmers are under the age of 35. We need to incentivize careers in farming to ensure we have a sustainable employment model to protect America’s food security going forward.”

# KEEPING PROMISES TO OUR VETERANS



VETS SUMMIT OMAHA  
NOVEMBER 9, 2015



**BRAD BELIEVES WE MUST KEEP THE PROMISES WE MADE TO  
OUR VETERANS BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE,  
CONNECTING VETS WITH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, AND  
EXPANDING ACCESS TO EARNED EDUCATION BENEFITS.**



**[Fresh Look at Omaha VA Offers Hope](#)**

“The problem is well-known. But the solution has been mired in bureaucratic sluggishness. Omaha’s aging VA hospital needs to be replaced. In 2007, a Department of Veterans Affairs study found the 65-year-old hospital inadequate and outdated, with problems in its electrical system, heating and cooling systems and more.”

**[Ashford Fights Proposed Funding Shift from Omaha VA to Overbudget Denver project](#)**

“The idea met with a quick rejection from Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb. That’s an absolute nonstarter,” Ashford said Monday. “That would be a 180-degree change, and it just absolutely is not going to happen.”

**[Rep. Ashford Meets with Military Advocates, Veterans Monday](#)**

“U.S. Rep. Brad Ashford asked for feedback from Nebraska veterans and advocates Monday at a roundtable discussion at American Legion post no. 1.” “We need to keep the push on mental health issues. A facility here in Omaha, the VA hospital is a big concern with all of our veterans,” Randy Squier, of Paralyzed Veterans of America, said.”

**[VA Serious about Omaha](#)**

“If this bit of common sense is any indication, the prospects for a replacement veterans hospital in Omaha are looking brighter: “The vast majority of the time, people on the ground have a much better perspective than we do here in Washington.”

**[Monday Job Fair Hopes to Connect Veterans with Employers](#)**

“Nebraska Rep. Brad Ashford is reaching out to veterans to connect them with jobs Monday. His office is hosting the veterans summit and job fair at the University of Nebraska Omaha.”

# SECURING OUR NATION FROM TERRORISM



## CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

FEBRUARY, 2015



**BRAD BELIEVES NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR SAFETY. TO SECURE THE HOMELAND, WE MUST TAKE THE FIGHT TO TERRORISTS BEFORE THEY BRING IT TO US.**



**[After trip to Middle East, Rep. Ashford is clear on terrorists: Kill them](#)**

“The United States and its allies have the ability to destroy the Islamic State militants, and can do so without putting U.S. troops on the ground, Rep. Brad Ashford said Friday after returning from the Middle East.”

**[Nebraska Guard gets Cyber Unit](#)**

“Rep. Brad Ashford, 2nd District, said the team will be called upon to help protect Department of Defense networks and critical infrastructure and provide support to Army Cyber Command and its defensive cyberspace operations.”

**[As Offutt runway crumbles, some fear that 55th Wing could leave Bellevue](#)**

“Earlier this month, Garrett and U.S. Rep. Brad Ashford, D-Neb., met with Joganich and 55th Wing Commander Col. Marty Reynolds to talk about the runway project. They drove down the bumpy strip in a truck to get a closer look. “Clearly, it has to be redone,” Ashford said after the trip.”

**[Brad Ashford says Iran nuclear deal 'not good enough'](#)**

“This deal is not good enough for Israel, not good enough for the United States of America, not good enough for the Middle East, and not good enough for the world,” Ashford said in a speaking engagement before two Omaha Jewish groups.”

**[Ashford Calls for Gun Control for People on No-Fly List](#)**

“I support the Second Amendment,” the Omaha congressman said in a statement to The World-Herald. “But keeping guns and explosives out of the hands of suspected terrorists is not gun control. It’s a common sense, responsible way to strengthen our national security.”

**[Ashford Criticizes GOP’s Tone on Syrian Refugees: ‘Hate is Filling our Airwaves’](#)**

“I am disappointed that the political debate in our nation has unfortunately taken an ugly and dangerous turn,” the Omaha congressman said in a press release. “Hate is filling our airwaves.”

# SERVING THE PEOPLE OF NEBRASKA



**IN ADDITION TO WORKING ON CRITICAL LEGISLATION, BRAD IS FIGHTING TO ENSURE THAT NEBRASKANS GET THE HARD-EARNED FEDERAL BENEFITS THEY DESERVE.**



**Fighting for veterans benefits**

Elderly veterans frequently have trouble getting transportation to the VA hospital and other locations around town. The Metro Area Planning Agency (MAPA) recognized this need and asked Rep. Ashford for help getting others to work together to find a solution. Now MAPA, Metro Transit and the VA are moving forward with a pilot program that allows veterans to call one hotline to arrange transportation. The one-call center will allow both veterans and agencies to more efficiently book transportation.

Sadly, too many of our men and women returning from serving our country overseas come home with physical and mental illnesses. Our office is here to help. Stephanie Durr told us about her veteran husband and his struggle with mental illness and alcohol abuse. She was worried that her husband was not stable enough to be released from the VA inpatient treatment program. When Rep. Ashford reached out to the VA, they immediately got in touch with Stephanie and assured her that her husband's release was on hold and she would be included more heavily in the rehabilitation process.

It is tough enough dealing with the death of a loved one; it only got worse for an Omaha man when he was told his father's death came with a big bill from the VA. How much? Well the son was prepared to pay \$6,500 but the VA said he owed \$11,000. You see, to save money dad had moved home from a VA-helped-pay-for care facility. But the VA never reduced the payment, leaving a \$4,500 hole. For months the son worked to repay the "extra" money but was getting nowhere until he called Congressman Ashford's office. After numerous phone calls it was ruled that dad's family doesn't owe a dime.

It's no fun being stuck in the system and staring down the barrel of a debt collector. Just ask a 100 percent disabled vet who had a seizure in 2015 and was taken by ambulance to the VA hospital. The ambulance company said he owed \$942. When his family fought the bill, the company threatened to call in a collections firm. When Congressman Ashford's office called we found out that the family had been given the wrong departments to call over the last few months and they were stuck in the system. No longer—the issue has been resolved.

## **Taking the lead on veterans issues**

From job hunting to health care - veterans took center stage throughout the year in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District. The future of the VA hospital found one of the VA's top hands, Chief of Staff Rob Nabors, in town to meet with several dozen vets to get their first-hand view of what 21<sup>st</sup> Century care should look like. Congressman Ashford also hosted a "Boots to Business" job fair. Seventy-five companies welcomed over 200 veterans looking to land work or start-up their own firms.

## **Fighting for disability benefits**

On April 9th 2015, the federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM) unexpectedly stopped Charlene M. Obrien's disability payments. Stonewalled by OPM, Charlene asked Congressman Ashford for help, launching a long fight for answers. In October, with Charlene struggling financially and facing eviction, OPM was told enough was enough—within a week her payments were reinstated along with \$74,704 in back pay.

## **Supporting area non-profits**

When you think of government red tape, there's a good chance the IRS quickly comes to mind. In 2015 Congressman Ashford's office worked with the IRS to clear that red tape for two groups trying to reestablish their not-for-profit—501(c)(3)— status. We helped expedite one group's approval, while working with the second organization to get the written go-ahead it needed.

When it comes to receiving federal grants, deserving groups might need a little help—Congressman Ashford is more than willing to lend a hand. Take for example Omaha Economic Development Corporation's (OEDC) push for bigger and better urban farming on the city's north side. OEDC was looking to develop an upright, no-soil farm providing jobs and greening-up an old warehouse. After meeting with OEDC and learning about the project, we were able to connect them with the appropriate officials at the USDA to access technical assistance and successfully apply for that federal grant money.



**Please contact us if we can be of service to you.**

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