



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—Three members of Nebraska's congressional delegation are planning to participate in the 12th annual Nebraska Capitol Forum on America's Future on March 29 at the State Capitol.

U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson and U.S. Reps. Lee Terry and Adrian Smith will meet with a group of 100 high school students to answer foreign policy questions 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 26 high schools in Lincoln, Omaha, Ashland, Atkinson, Auburn, Bellevue, Cairo, Crawford, Dodge, Falls City, Genoa, Grand Island, Hampton, Hartington, Hastings, Hemingford, Holdrege, Howells, Norfolk, North Platte, Rising City, Springfield, Sterling 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 29, 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 Gov. Dave Heineman 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 29 forum, teachers and students will return home to share their experiences with classmates, broadening the impact of Capitol Forum to more than 1,000 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 Duncan Family Trust, Gretchen and Hal Lainson, A to Z Printing, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, "We the People" initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, 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 senior program officer, at (402) 474-2131, ext. 104.