



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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The list of schools/students who took part in Capitol Forum on March 24 at the State Capitol is included with this release.

Protecting the homeland a popular choice for Nebraska students

LINCOLN – Protecting the homeland remains the best policy when it comes to relating with other nations, according to Nebraska students participating in the 16th Capitol Forum on America's Future. The program is co-sponsored by the Secretary of State's office and Humanities Nebraska, a statewide non-profit organization.

Thirty-six percent of participating students felt that rather than engage with foreign nations, the best course of action remained one in which America's leaders focused more fully on issues at home including: a sagging economy, unemployment, health care, education and inadequate resources to protect against terrorism. This is the fourth year in a row that students have opted for this policy.

Their second choice was one that acknowledges America's place in an interconnected and interdependent world. Twenty-seven percent of students said it was essential to build a more cooperative world by strengthening and reforming the United Nations. Twenty-two percent felt it was imperative to protect our country through whatever actions necessary to keep it safe and strong.

Over the years, the least popular option has been one in which the United States dictates international policies and takes action to make sure they are adopted.

This year 80 students from 21 schools and their teachers took part in Capitol Forum at the State Capitol on March 24 to deliberate the four foreign policy options. Those students then returned to their schools to share the results with their classmates and complete the survey. Topics touch on a variety of issues including: terrorism, immigration, environment, international trade and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

When asked what concerned them most about international involvement, 46 percent of students said they feared the use of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons by terrorists. Forty-one percent said they were concerned that the U.S. would drain its resources while trying to solve the problems of other countries. Other chief issues included losing jobs to other countries, loose border controls and the threat to security as well as more Americans dying as a result of terrorism.

In their analysis of which foreign policy actions were most appropriate, a majority of students in Capitol Forum said they thought the U.S. should accept fewer immigrants as well as crack down on illegal immigration. This has been the first choice since 2009.

Students also suggested that military action should be taken to stop human rights violations, even if other countries including our allies, disagree. The third top rated choice involved imposing trade sanctions on countries that threaten other countries or contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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, the program is funded in part by the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the State of Nebraska.

For additional information and complete ballot results, please visit the Capitol Forum page at <http://humanitiesnebraska.org>.

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List of Participating Schools & Students

Ashland-Greenwood High School: Katie Richards, Serena Rohrbough

Auburn High School: Jared Frenzel, Yaid Puente Jimenez, Tyler Barker, Ellis Clopton

Bellevue West High School: Kaitlyn Miles, Marisa Sullivan, DeVante Vaughn, Anthony-John Aduloju

Duchesne Academy: Ally Geary, Sarah Schmidt, Mary Grace Stanco, Maizie Jensen

Falls City High School: Zachary Jordening, Sydney Armbruster, Brenden Heckenlively, Taylor O'Brien

Hampton High School: Tristan Boyce, Rachel Dowling, Ethan Smith, Ty Ogden

Hastings High School: Chandler Fielder, Ethan Kerr, Diana Chavez

Hemingford High School: Asa Carlson, Joseph Rozmiarek, Christian Rozmiarek, Hannah Fessler

Holdrege High School: Julianna Burr, Tessa Perez, Walker Hohensee, Jacob Pfeifer

Howells-Dodge High School: Trevor Blum, Tiffany Sabey, Shelby Dirkschneider, Danny Widhelm

Lincoln North Star: Aleciya Kringel, Nikkita Steckly, Tanner Ogden, Bailey Parde

Louisville High School: Brenden DeBrie, Sterling Reeves, Bret Belter, Megan Knott

Nebraska Lutheran High School: Sydney Edens, Melanie Dodson, Taylor Richert, Elyssa Luckinbill

Norfolk Senior High School: Allison Lambert, Molly McNally, Layne Roth

North Platte High School: McKenna Miller, Charles Hokanson, Nicholas Wilkinson, Mika Rhodes

Platteview High School: Michelle Keyes, Noah Wright, Adam Granville, Dylan Dostal

Stanton High School: Jaden Estes, Jorge Hernandez, Paul Ahrenholtz, Tommie Brechbill

Sterling High School: Ben Logston, Tara Hestermann, Jordan Lempka, Meri Hietbrink

Waverly High School: Peyton Schneider, Dylan Janecek, Jared Story, Jared Viets

West Holdt High School: Alyssa Vanderbeek, Samantha Sears, Cameron Schmuecker, Josh Coyle

Wilcox-Hildreth High School: Ali Halsted, Emile Pool, Katelyn Ziebarth, Charlene Corral