

NE-02 District Primer

In 2024, Republican Don Bacon won this seat by 5829 votes.

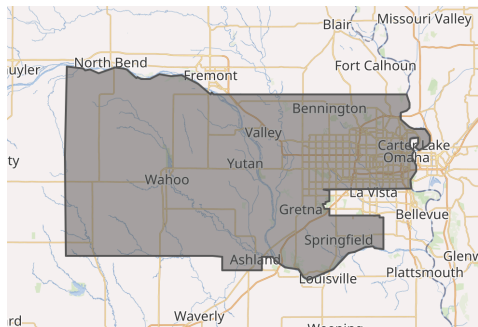
That's close! Dems lost by just 5 votes per precinct. If we can persuade just 6 voters per precinct, we can win this year. With your help, we're going to **FLIP** this key seat and secure a Democratic House majority in 2026.

Key dates
Filing Deadline: March 2
Primary: May 12
Midterms: November 3

Recent Election Results

2024 Presidential Election	2024 House Election	2022 House Election
Harris: 163,541 (51.64%) Trump: 148,905 (47.02%)	Don Bacon (R): 160,198 (50.09%) Tony Vargas (D): 154,369 (49.1%)	Don Bacon (R): 112,663 (51.3%) Tony Vargas (D): 106,807 (48.7%)

District Facts & Stats



Largest Cities

- Omaha, pop. 483,335
- Papillion, 23,791

Geography

NE-02 encompasses the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area. Mostly urban, with suburban enclaves in Omaha and Papillion, the district includes all of Douglas County (Omaha), western Sarpy County, and part of Saunders County. It is economically significant to the region and the state, with major industries throughout. Offutt Air Force Base is located in Sarpy County and has a population of ~45,000 active-duty service members and their families, as well as other employees and retirees.

Citizenry

The district is largely white. Black residents are the next largest group, with a significant presence in North Omaha. Thirteen percent of residents identify as Hispanic. One in three Black residents, and sixty percent of Black children, live in poverty; and Black households earn less than 60% of white residents. Omaha is an important center of Black history.

The Local Vibe

In NE-02, a competitive district in a ruby-red state, voters have often preferred Democratic presidential candidates, and recent GOP House wins have been by increasingly small margins. Thanks to Trump, the district's diverse population is on edge. In June 2025 a massive ICE raid at an Omaha meat-packing plant, which resulted in the detention of 75 employees, spurred protests. A few days later, hundreds attended No Kings protests in nearby Council Bluffs, IA. Rising costs due to Trump's tariffs and fees on imported goods, as well as cuts to SNAP, Medicaid, the VA, and the USPS have many people worried; meanwhile the state legislature just overrode the statewide voter initiative of 2022 which raised the minimum wage in Nebraska.

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Key Issues

- **Affordability:** Nebraska's minimum wage was raised by an initiative passed by the state's voters in 2022. Despite rising prices everywhere, in 2026 the majority-GOP state legislature approved a bill to lower it.
 - **Environmental concerns:** Omaha's water comes from rivers and from the Dakota Sandstone Aquifer. These sources are vulnerable to pipeline spills (DAPL and Keystone XL). Many Omaha homes still have lead water pipes that could degrade due to changes in the local water supply.
 - **Immigration:** In 2025, a massive raid on an Omaha meat-packing plant detained 75 workers and sparked local outcry. Meatpacking is an important industry here, dependent on immigrant workers.
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About the Candidates

In June 2026, incumbent GOP Rep. Don Bacon announced that he would not seek re-election.

Denise Powell | Democratic Candidate

Denise Powell is the founder of Women Who Run, an organization that has helped hundreds of Nebraskans run for local office. Her advocacy also protected Nebraska public schools and the families they serve, and helped stop extremists from passing abortion bans in the state.

Powell is focused on ensuring that ordinary Nebraskans who work hard will continue to enjoy the Good Life for which their state is known. She will protect veterans' benefits and essential programs like Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP/CHIP, and Social Security, fight MAGA's efforts to dismantle public education, and work hard to restore the basic rights that MAGA has so brazenly rolled back, like voting rights and the right to choose. She is also committed to protecting the state's coveted Blue Dot electoral college vote against the GOP's ongoing efforts to subvert the will of Nebraska voters by repealing it.

She has been endorsed by more than sixty local and national leaders including Tony Vargas, who ran twice against the former GOP incumbent, prominent local leaders including the Omaha civil-rights champion Preston Love, by the Congressional Black Caucus, and by several PACs including BOLD PAC, Elect Democratic Women, Latino Victory, and Emily's List. She frequently publishes op-eds in the *Omaha World Herald*, expanding her name recognition, and in 2025, she raised more than \$1M to support her bid for this seat.

Brinker Harding | GOP Candidate

Since 2017, **Brinker Harding** served on the Omaha City Council. He is a broker and commercial real estate developer at Colliers International. He was previously chief of staff for former Mayor Hal Daub.

He believes spurring domestic fossil fuel production and technologies like AI and cryptocurrency will somehow relieve high prices at the grocery store and the pump. He is pro-cop and pro-gun, a great believer in "peace through strength," and a supporter of "public-private" partnerships that wrest control of public goods from voters in favor of wealthy donors and philanthropies. He has preposterously blamed the Biden Administration for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and he justifies Trump's disastrous war in Iran by blaming that country "and its proxies" for the violence in Gaza. He has blamed President Biden for the death of a Nebraskan soldier, Corp. Deagan Page, during the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. He is endorsed by every member of Nebraska's presently all-GOP Congressional delegation as well as former Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, the Nebraska Farm Bureau, by various local right-wing politicians, and Donald Trump.

The contrast: Powell's qualifications vastly outweigh Harding's. She is ready for Washington on day one, and she will keep the district's interests uppermost in mind, rather than performing to please Trump.

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