

**Lou Ann Linehan**  
**Nebraska Senate District 39**



**Summary**

Legislative Biography

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Elected to Nebraska Legislature: 2016

Born Lou Ann Lovitt, Sept. 16, 1955, in Beatrice.

Education: Graduate of Lewiston High School, Lewiston Consolidated Schools, 1973.

Family: Married Kevin B. Linehan, Aug. 23, 1980; four children: Patrick B., Katie M., Meghan L. and Shannon P. Seim.

Occupation: Consultant

Former: Deputy principle officer, pillar director, deputy team leader, deputy assistant secretary, U.S. Department of State; chief of staff to U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel.

Member: St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Honors and awards: 2014 Distinguished Honoree, Women's Center for Advancement – Omaha; U.S. Department of State Superior Honor Award 2002 and 2012, Meritorious Award, 2010; 1989 Chairman's Award, Douglas County Republican Party; Lewiston Consolidated Schools Hall of Fame, Class of 1973.

[Legislator's Biography, [8.27.18](#)]

## [ALEC Legislator of the Week Q&A – 8.27.18](#)

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This Week, ALEC and FreedomWorks introduce Nebraska State Senator Lou Ann Linehan. Senator Linehan was elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 2016. She has been honored with several awards during her career including Distinguished Honoree, Women’s Center for Advancement, U.S. Department of State Superior Honor Award, Meritorious Award, and the Chairman’s Award for Douglas County Republican Party. She and her husband Kevin have four children, Patrick, Katie, Meghan, and Shannon.

### **Why did you run for office?**

I ran for the Legislature because I am concerned for Nebraska’s future. Both our property and income taxes are too high. State funding for education is neither transparent nor equitable. We need to ensure that both taxes and spending are equitable and transparent.

### **In your view, what is the biggest issue facing Nebraska?**

The biggest issues facing Nebraska are high taxes coupled with a depressed agricultural economy, which in turn leaves the Legislature with dwindling revenues to address either.

### **If you could “wave your magic wand,” what would you like to see immediately implemented in Nebraska?**

If I could wave a magic wand, I would immediately implement a public school financing system that is both fair and transparent.

### **Do you serve on any committees, if so which committees and why? How do you think you have impacted them?**

I serve on the Legislature’s Education Committee, Health and Human Services Committee, The Planning Committee, and the Performance Audit Committee. I chose Education and Health Committees because they make up the largest part of our state budget. I work to ensure both our public schools and Health & Human Services are efficient and addressing the needs of Nebraska’s students and those who are unable to care for themselves.

I take committee hearings very seriously. In the Nebraska Unicameral, the public is truly our second house. It is important that legislators listen and ask questions when Nebraskans take the time to participate in the legislative process.

### **What project or law are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of the Nebraska Reading Improvement Act, which was LB 651 (2017). This bill requires public schools throughout the state to assess young students, K-3rd grade, three times during the school year. The assessments will allow schools to identify students with reading disabilities or other issues, and provide the interventions needed to ensure all students are reading by the end of third grade and ready to read to learn.

### **How has ALEC helped you as a legislator?**

ALEC meetings are helpful because they provide legislators with the opportunity to meet with other representatives from across wide areas of interest and specific knowledge sets. ALEC meetings offer the opportunity to explore how other states have dealt with the same challenges we face in Nebraska. Further, guest lecturers and speakers motivate attendees with new ideas and more importantly, remind us of our commitment to free markets and limited government.

### **What is your favorite thing about Nebraska?**

My favorite thing about Nebraska is the many hardworking, generous, common sense citizens.

### **Can you share a fun fact about yourself that's not in your official bio?**

My great grandfather served in the Nebraska Senate in the late 19th century, when Nebraska still had two houses.

### **ALEC membership/ties**

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Attended annual ALEC conference in Denver, 2017

ALEC's Nebraska State Chair, 2018

ALEC's Legislator of the Week, 8.27.18

### **ALEC Legislation**

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**State Senator Lou Ann Linehan sponsored a charter school bill with striking parallels to ALEC's model bill *The Family Education Tax Credit Program*.** According to ALEC Exposed, this model bill was drafted with the support of a for-profit online school company. In Nebraska, Sen. Linehan's ALEC-inspired bill received heavy criticism at a Revenue Committee hearing, where fellow legislators charged LB 295 would drain millions of dollars from the Nebraska state budget and give wealthy people a lucrative tax break. Opponents decried the ability for estates, trusts and certain corporations and partnerships could make contributions and claim a tax credit. Fellow state Sen. Burke Harr pointed out that the \$10 million lost in state revenue would jeopardize spending on social services, corrections, mental health and public schools in Nebraska [[ALEC Exposed](#); Omaha World Herald, [1.27.18](#); LB 295, Indefinitely postponed, 4.18.2018].

### **Hits**

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**State Senator Lou Ann Linehan drew sharp criticism from teachers for proposing a bill that would require Nebraskan third-graders to be held back in school if they failed to reading proficiency at grade level.** Educators argued that LB 651 takes the wrong approach to improving reading proficiency and would burden districts without providing extra funding. "Clearly Sen. Linehan wants children to be able to read, and clearly she does not want to hurt children," said Lincoln Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks, an opponent of the bill. "Some people have said this is a strange way to show it, and I would agree." Currently, the decision to hold students back from progressing to the next grade level is made on a student-by-student basis, incorporating the consultation by parents, teachers and administrators. Studies show requiring students to repeat a grade doesn't necessarily have a large, beneficial impact, and can actually be harmful in some circumstances. Sen. Linehan states in her interview with ALEC that

this is the legislative proposal she is most proud of [Journal Star, [5.11.2017](#); LOTW, [8.27.2018](#), LB 651, Provisions/portions of LB651 amended into LB1081 by AM2593, 4.23.2018].

**State Senator Lou Ann Linehan supported a state budget bill that would defund Planned Parenthood in Nebraska.** As an explanation of her support, Sen. Lou Ann Linehan of Omaha said many Nebraskans feel “it’s morally incorrect for their tax dollars to go to abortion services.” In opposition to the proposal, Danielle Conrad, executive director of ACLU Nebraska, stated that the bill “risks tearing significant holes in our safety net and impermissibly targets trusted providers like Planned Parenthood” [Omaha World Herald, [3.29.2018](#); LB 944, Provisions/portions of LB1062 amended into LB944 by AM1699, 4.23.2018].