

NORFOLK DAILY NEWS



Former Norfolk attorney announces candidacy

By JERRY GUENTHER

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When [David Domina](#) returns to Norfolk, he feels right at home.

The Omaha lawyer was in town Tuesday evening to announce to supporters at Prenger's Restaurant that he is a candidate for the U.S. Senate.

Domina, the first Democrat to announce his candidacy, grew up on a farm south of Coleridge and spent many years practicing law in Norfolk before moving to Omaha.

He also spoke to the Daily News on Wednesday morning before heading to Wayne as part of the second day of a six-day, 30-city trek across Nebraska to announce his candidacy.

Domina, who was last in Coleridge before Christmas, graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Law in 1972. He practiced law in Norfolk from 1974-89 but still had a presence in a Norfolk law firm until 1999.

Domina said he has many fond memories of Norfolk. While in Norfolk, he was an assistant city attorney and tried many cases, including several before now retired Judge Merritt Warren of Creighton.

“He was probably the best judge I’ve ever practiced before — anywhere,” Domina said.

At one time, Domina was joined in his practice by John Gerrard, who was the youngest-ever appointee to the Nebraska Supreme Court. Gerrard left the court in 2012 when he was appointed a federal judge.

“We had a lot of talent accumulate in one spot,” Domina said.

In visiting with Nebraskans, Domina said, one of the main concerns seems to be what needs to be done to make the health care issue change to resolve the insurance question and focus instead on patient care.

“Most people who ask about Obamacare are focused on the problems,” he said.

Although the majority of Nebraskans are against Obamacare, they want a system of insurance different from what they had and that the care they get is the best available, he said.

The debate should have two parts, “including cleaning up Obamacare.”

“You wouldn’t throw away a piece of new machinery because it didn’t work,” he said. “You’d trade it in or fix it. And that’s what we should do with this.”

Secondly, the nation needs to decide where it will devote its resources so that health care research and medicine focus on human needs — and not the distractions, he said.

Domina has been an attorney in many high-profile cases, including the impeachment of the then-Attorney General Paul Douglas after the collapse of Commonwealth Savings Co. in the 1980s.

He also ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1986.

“I was really probably too young,” Domina said. “I was also too young to know I was too young.”

Domina is a candidate for the seat being vacated by Sen. Mike Johanns, which already has a crowded field of Republicans and one Independent candidate.

Domina said he wants to make sure people are fully and fairly informed in the election.

“No matter who the Republicans nominate, if we have a fair and full and honest debate and each side gets to evaluate who is what, Nebraskans get to judge my sincerity,” Domina said. “And I think what will be revealed is that neither political party better count on me because I’m going to be a U.S. senator representing Nebraska. I am not going to be a Democrat or a Republican or a member of either caucus devoted to anybody else.”