

FREMONT TRIBUNE

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PAGE A3



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SPORTS, B1



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JUAN SALINAS II, NEBRASKA EXAMINER

Nebraska U.S. Rep. Mike Flood, R-Neb., during his town hall in Lincoln on Aug. 4, 2025.

FLOOD CONTINUES TO HOLD TOWN HALLS DESPITE HOSTILE CROWDS

JUAN SALINAS II
Nebraska Examiner

Like his other town halls in recent years, U.S. Rep. Mike Flood dealt with boos and jeers during his roughly hourlong gathering last week in his hometown of Norfolk, Nebraska.

Some in the audience of roughly 200 attendees asked Flood about his stance on federal support for voter-legalized medical marijuana in Nebraska, the Trump administration's nearly \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund, the state of the economy, the Epstein files and his support for President Donald Trump.

Flood and his team anticipated the reactions of some constituents, such as they did news coverage of the town hall, including stories with headlines such as "GOP Rep Heckled at Trainwreck Town Hall as Trump Backlash Boils Over." Flood says he isn't deterred from making his case to his voters in person at town halls, as other

congressional Republicans have stopped.

He says he wants his constituents to interact with their government because "nothing gets better if we're not talking to each other."

"I feel like it's part of the job ... you've got to stand in the town square ... I know that there can be a lot of emotion at these; that's the time we live in," Flood told the Examiner before his Norfolk town hall.

National Republicans are facing a mid-term environment that typically looks rough for the party in power. The former speaker of the Legislature is seeking his third full term this November. He won a special election in 2022, replacing former U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry after Fortenberry was convicted of lying to federal investigators about his knowledge of foreign funds illegally donated in 2016 to his congressional campaign. Fortenberry denied wrongdoing, and his convictions were later overturned on a technicality,

and the refiled charges were dropped by the Trump administration.

At last week's gathering, Flood focused on what he described as his bipartisan efforts on the Hill and on the basics of helping constituents through his local offices in eastern Nebraska's 1st Congressional District. He mentioned his staff helping people file tax returns. He expressed sympathy for some of his constituents' frustrations.

He drew some applause — and later criticism from some supporters of the president — for saying he doesn't want to give a "one penny" to a "January 6 insurrectionist" from Trump's new "anti-weaponization" fund.

A noticeable difference from his 2025 town hall in Lincoln was fewer mentions of Trump's tax and spending bill, the "One Big Beautiful Bill." The tax law — with new,

Please see **FLOOD**, Page A6

Pillen OKs private energy companies to serve data centers

ANNA KLEIBER
Lincoln Journal Star

Gov. Jim Pillen signed legislation allowing energy developers to build and own power plants in Nebraska to serve data centers.

Introduced by Niobrara Sen. Barry DeKay on behalf of the governor, the legislation (LB1261) prohibits consumer-owned public power utilities from interfering with private power plants built to serve a single industrial customer with an electricity demand over 1,000 megawatts.

The bill has been closely associated with data centers and looks to minimize the energy impact on Nebraskans in a state where 100% of electric utilities are public

power.

At a news conference Tuesday, Pillen said the legislation will allow Nebraska to meet the unprecedented demand for power without affecting the cost for ratepayers, calling it "behind-the-meter" legislation.

"Our foreign adversaries are getting at it really aggressively. I think it's important that we develop strong and secure artificial intelligence technologies. It's imperative for our nation, and it's imperative that we can get that done with electricity in the state of Nebraska," Pillen said.



Pillen



DeKay

DeKay said the legislation will remove the financial risk for public power utilities and customers while also ensuring industrial customers that require larger amounts of power are served.

"Public power must serve everyone, but our public power utilities will tell you that there is currently a multi-year backlog for when some of these large customers can be served," DeKay said. "If these new hyperscale loads do materialize, this legislation protects public power by placing the cost burden in private industry instead of the public, the ratepayers of public power."

John McClure, the executive vice president of external affairs and general counsel for the Nebraska Public Power District, said there is also the possibility for private energy developers to negotiate with public power utilities to sell back excess power to customers in the area.

"There are mechanisms for that power to be sold back to the grid, but that's all subject to negotiation," McClure said. "One of the attributes of the language in the bill that again helps protect the consumers in the state is there has to be a proven benefit in the arrangement that's put together with the local public power utility."

Please see **CENTER**, Page A6

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Weather
Some clouds, showers
High: 79 Low: 67
Forecast: A6

Inside

Obituaries	A2	Comics	B4
Nation&World	A5	TV	B5
Sports	B1-2	Classifieds	B6

