

# Government's role divides candidates

**2nd Congressional District candidates Christensen and Davis say they hold the majority of public views.**

**By BRIAN CARLSON**  
Staff Reporter

Nebraska's 2nd Congressional District race has unfolded as a clash between opponents who find little common ground in political matters and disagree about the government's role in the United States' future.

Incumbent Republican Congressman Jon Christensen and Democratic challenger James Martin Davis disagree on most political issues, but each claims to represent the majority views of the people of the 2nd District.

Christensen, 33, is seeking his second term in Congress following an upset of three-term incumbent Peter Hoagland in 1994. The former insurance salesman said his campaign philosophy is built around support for a balanced budget amendment, tax relief, and stronger sentencing for criminals.

Christensen praised the Republican-controlled 104th Congress for eliminating \$53 billion in annual discretionary spending from the federal budget, thus helping to trim the federal budget deficit.

"We've tried to do exactly what we said we would do," he said. "That's my campaign motto."

"Given a chance at a second session in control of Congress, we can complete some of the things we've started to do."

Christensen said he has tried to keep his campaign message simple and is "confident that my views fall in line with the majority of my constituents."

Christensen voted for the proposed balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which passed the House of Representatives but was defeated by one vote in the Senate last year. He favors Republican presiden-

## Barrett, Webster agree on little in 3rd District

**By KASEY KERBER**  
Senior Reporter

It started with a disagreement on who would be permitted to run in Nebraska's 3rd District congressional race.

Now, Republican incumbent Bill Barrett and Democratic challenger John Webster agree on very little.

Barrett, who was unopposed at the time of the May primary, won the GOP nomination and received enough write-in votes to claim the Democratic and Libertarian nominations, as well.

"I then had to make a decision of whether to run for all three," Barrett said. "But I'm a Republican, and I chose to run on the Republican ticket."

The result was Democrat John Webster's late entrance into the race, which the Republican party challenged. A district judge ruled that Webster could run.

Barrett said the law cited that al-

### Jon Christensen



Age: 33. Born Feb. 20, 1963, near St. Paul, Neb.

Hometown: St. Paul, Neb.

Occupation: Insurance salesman; U.S. Representative

Family: Divorced; no children.

Education: Graduated from Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, Neb., 1985; law degree from South Texas College of Law, 1989.

Political Experience: Became Republican nominee for 2nd District U.S. House seat by defeating opponents Ron

Staskiewicz and Sen. Brad Ashford in 1994. Went on to defeat incumbent Democrat Peter Hoagland.

**"Jon Christensen's policies support only the top 20 percent of our economy. My vision for America is a positive and all-inclusive one, of opportunity, hope, and promise."**

**JAMES MARTIN DAVIS**

tial nominee Bob Dole's plan for an across-the-board tax cut of 15 percent, saying citizens have a right to keep more of their money.

Despite voting to repeal the federal ban on possession of assault weapons, Christensen said stronger sentencing for criminals is essential for controlling crime rates in the United States.

He criticized Davis for characterizing tougher criminal sentencing as "asinine."

But Davis, a 50-year-old Omaha attorney, said fighting crime is one of his top priorities and questioned Christensen's credentials for leading

that fight.

During his law career, Davis has prosecuted and defended alleged criminals and has participated in actual arrests and raids.

Davis said Christensen's plan for fighting crime reactively ignores the fact that criminals rarely know or even consider their punishment before committing a crime.

He praised President Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill, which provided for 100,000 additional police officers and various inner-city crime prevention programs.

Davis also said education will be a

vital issue in the future and criticized Christensen for favoring the elimination of the Department of Education and decreased funding for student loans.

Christensen said education is a local issue and should not be subject to federal intervention.

Davis criticized the 104th Congress for being full of "ideologues who are unwilling to compromise," and said it is the most anti-educational, anti-environmental Congress in history.

He said Republican leaders showed their lack of leadership by shutting down the government and bringing it

to the verge of defaulting on the national debt.

"The hallmark of leadership is the ability to appear in front of a group of people, bring them together and move them forward — not divide them," he said.

Davis said Christensen's policies reflect a commitment to just the top 20 percent of the economy. Davis said he would fight for the concerns of a wider base of the population.

"Jon Christensen believes the bottom line of government is the dollar," he said. "But in my view, the bottom line of government is the people."

### James Martin Davis



Age: 50. Born Nov. 30, 1945, in Omaha, Neb.

Hometown: Omaha.

Occupation: Attorney.

Family: Wife, Sarah L. "Polo" Davis; one daughter, Victoria "Tori" Davis, 23; one son James "Jimmy" Davis, 16 (deceased).

Education: Graduated University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1967; law degree University of Indiana-Indianapolis, 1975.

Military Service: U.S. Army, 1968-70. Served in Vietnam, 1969-70.

Political: Party affiliation is Democrat. Has not sought political office until now.

### William E. Barrett



Age: 67. Born Feb. 9, 1929, in Lexington, Neb.

Hometown: Lexington.

Occupation: U.S. Representative.

Family: wife, Elsie; four grown children, William, David, Elizabeth and Jane.

Education: Graduated from Hastings College, 1951.

Military Experience: Served in U.S. Navy during the Korean War.

Political Experience: Nebraska Republican Party chairman 1973-1975. Served in the Nebraska Legislature, 1979-90. Speaker of Nebraska's one-house Legislature in 1987; re-elected in 1989. Worked on George Bush's vice presidential and presidential campaigns. Elected to the U.S. House in 1990; re-elected in 1992 and 1994.

lowed Webster to enter the race was probably intended to be used in the case of a candidate's death.

"I hope the law will be eventually changed," Barrett said. "If it's not, then

what is the need for a primary election?"

Outside the election controversy, Barrett and Webster agree on little.

Barrett, a three-term representative

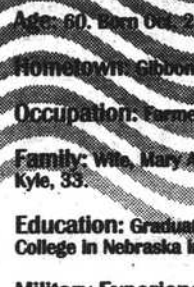
from Lexington, said he is proud of the farm bill he helped introduce last year.

Barrett also says action must be

taken to reform Social Security now.

Webster said there is ample funding for Social Security, but that "we need to be careful that we're not spending those funds for anything else. We need to just leave them alone."

### John Dean Webster



Age: 60. Born Oct. 28, 1935, in Gibbon, Neb.

Hometown: Gibbon.

Occupation: Farmer.

Family: Wife, Mary Ann; four sons, Anthony "Tony" 37; Kevin, 36; Michael "Mike" 34; Kyle, 33.

Education: Graduated from Wood River High School, 1953. Attended Kearney State College in Nebraska in 1958.

Military Experience: Served in U.S. Army 1955-1956.

Political Experience: Webster served as area campaign chairman for Democrats Jim Exon and Bob Kerrey when they ran for governor and later for the Senate. He also campaigned for Democratic presidential candidates Hubert Humphrey in 1972 and Gary Hart in 1984. Became the Democratic nominee in western and central Nebraska's 3rd District late in the election year when he filed on July 11.