

# Record and Platform of Senator George W. Norris

## George W. Norris the Man

BY WILLIAM KENT.

(Former leader of municipal reform movement in Chicago, Ex-Congressman from California, member of United States Tariff Commission, cattle feeder for thirty years in Nebraska, Kent & Burke Company, and for eight years an intimate associate of Norris in Washington. He has devoted his life and fortune to advancing the cause of democracy and has two sons fighting for it.)

George W. Norris is one of the ablest, surest, most diligent members of the Senate of the United States.

He is steadily and consistently devoting his life to the cause of democratic progress and human rights.

Equality of opportunity is not an empty phrase in his mouth, but is a religion to be fought for in season and out of season. More than almost any man in the National Government, he shows a zeal and an ability to make real and to apply the ideals of democracy to the daily lives of our people.

The Republican Party in nominating him has been true to the traditions of its founders—to the passionate longing for human liberty—to the belief in an inseparable nation with Federal powers in accord with national interests.

No one has more keenly realized or more clearly defined the functions and limitations of partisanship. No man among his colleagues in the House and Senate has questioned his sincerity or his willingness to aid and give all credit to those going the right way regardless of their party labels.

With Chairman Gore, Senator Kenyon and others of the Agricultural Committee, regardless of party, he has fought the good fight for the agricultural interests. Senator Owen, president of the Popular Government movement, has shared the leadership with him. Senator Hollis, the progressive Democrat from New Hampshire, has volunteered his fullest endorsement. His Republican colleagues give their testimony. Though the exigencies and customs of party politics debar many from indorsing those of the opposite party in whom they have most confidence, Norris' home folks should know and appreciate the cause and the meaning of his colleagues' trust in him and the power for good conferred by their esteem. It is built on fifteen years of faithful service. It is a good will that Nebraska cannot afford to lose.

In the clear realization of his duty as he has seen it, he has defended for himself and others the right of free speech and of criticism. He has done all in his power to help the successive administrations in Washington in the efforts to follow courses he deemed right. He has never conceded an inch to the partisan wickedness that would hamper national business for the sake of partisan advantage.

He is carefully constructive in his work and in his thought, a plain, practical, sensible sort of man, sure-footed and brave.

His kindly humanity, his plain good sense, made him aversive to militarism and to war. With the majority of Nebraska people and with the President, he hoped and believed that we could be spared from the horror, for a high service of peace making and the relief of the shattered peoples. He found himself facing a war declaration which he regarded as premature and he stood by his convictions. Information not then possessed by him, or any of us, has since become available. Definite war aims have been stated. Since the declaration of war he has done all in his power to help. His record is one of the highest loyalty to principle and to country. He stands and will stand to the end against an inconclusive peace. His response is the response of his people, slow to anger, hating war, but will to fight till fear of conquest is banished from the world.

Going back to the detail of his service, there has been no more intelligent or efficient advocate of the indispensable agricultural interests upon which rests our national structure.

He has stood squarely for the rights of labor. He has done all in his power to see that our natural resources are administered in the common interest.

He has fought for the recognition of the rights of the people to go down the line with their own government, without all the side tracks, switches, turntables and "Ys" that have permitted machine rule in the interest of the powerful.

He has stood up against the waste and the wickedness of the liquor traffic.

He has worked for the public ownership of public utilities.

In his contention for the suffrage for women, he has been true to his philosophy of permitting the people to rule.

He has accumulated the enmity of railway magnates, of packers, of looters of the public domain, of liquor interests, of machine politicians, and the whole tribe that batten and fatten on privilege.

They are shrieking "disloyalty" at this man whose unselfish life has demonstrated a loyalty beyond their powers of comprehension. They have reason to fear this modest, gentle, vigorous apostle of public rights and public righteousness. They look for the return of a vanished day, unmindful of the fact that its return would lead to the destruction and the waste of revolution. They cannot see what some of us clearly see, that the real conservatives are men who by daily struggle consistently apply the sentiments of democracy to conditions as they arise, and that through their work an orderly progress is made possible. In this evolution George W. Norris is an indispensable leader.

*William Kent*

## To the People of Nebraska

### If the People Could Watch Congress

By Judson King, Executive Secretary of National Popular Government League.

As a candidate for re-election to the Senate, I ask the people of Nebraska to give a fair and candid consideration to the record I have made during the sixteen years of my service. During all that time, in every official act I have been guided by my conscientious convictions as to what was right in the light of the information which I possessed. I have worked for constructive and progressive measures, following a fixed policy, looking toward the destruction of special privileges and bettering of the conditions of our people.

**PROSECUTION OF THE WAR**—The most important proposition confronting the American people is the vigorous and energetic prosecution of the war. The paramount object must be to make this the last war, and all the steps necessary to bring that about must be accomplished. I am opposed to any treaty of peace that will not make the world secure from a repetition of the present struggle and that will not make it impossible for the Kaiser and his military chieftains to bring about in the future a repetition of present conditions.

**FINANCING THE WAR**—I have favored the payment of war costs, in the largest possible measure, out of current taxation, to the end that at its close as small a burden as possible will be imposed upon posterity. Taxes should rest heaviest upon large incomes and should take at least 80 per cent of profits derived from the war. There should be a progressive inheritance tax. Conscription of wealth is as necessary as the conscription of men.

"We are in the war and must carry it to a successful issue whatever the cost may be. It must be carried on until the autocracy headed by the kaiser is driven from power and overthrown and a peace established as permanent as human ingenuity can make it."

G. W. NORRIS.  
Senate Speech, May 3, 1918.



GEORGE W. NORRIS.

**THE RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD**—When the war ceases will come critical years in our history. We shall need heavy taxes to retire our debt and also for reconstruction purposes. The principles of taxation adopted in war time should, with some modifications, be continued in times of peace until the last bond is paid. We should prepare opportunity for our returning soldiers, furnishing them with productive employment, in view of the vast displacement of labor. Unused land should be opened up and prepared for our people, with a full recognition that such effort is not a national waste, but will produce a national wealth to be shared by all.

**PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION OF FOOD**—The unorganized farmers who produce the food and the unorganized consumers who must purchase it should be protected from organized associations, both necessary and unnecessary, that intervene between the two extremes. In order to stimulate the production of food it is necessary that the producer be assured a fair and reasonable profit for his efforts. In the end this will redound to the benefit of the consumer as well as the producer. The most important item of food, an abundant supply of which is absolutely necessary to win the war, is wheat; and instead of fixing the price to the producer below what could be made from the same land in the production of other cereals, the Government should devote its energies to preventing unreasonable and extortionate profits on the part of the various organizations and corporations who handle it from the time it leaves the farm until, in the shape of flour, it reaches the table of the consumer. There should be no private monopolies, no organized profiteers, between the producer and the consumer to coin the sweat of the farmer and the laborer into tribute paid to privilege.

**THE PACKERS**—I am in sympathy with the findings of the Federal Trade Commission, and believe they have pointed out the remedies that will break up the monopoly and profiteering of the great meat-packing combinations. The stockyards at the great packing centers should be public market places, and as such should be owned and operated by the public without profit. Refrigerator cars and other private cars for live stock are part of the railway equipment, and should be taken over by the railroad administrator and operated as other common carriers.

**WATER POWER DEVELOPMENT**—The water power of the nation, an unwasted perpetual asset, should be developed as rapidly as possible. Wherever private agencies

"This is a war for world freedom. There are some, however, who are using our flag as a screen to hide profiteering. They would see the democracy for which we fight done to death before they would stop their plundering or surrender their privileges. This practice was denounced by Senator Norris as putting the dollar sign on the American flag."

are licensed for such development they must be controlled to prevent monopoly and extortion. I have opposed all legislation that was subject to the danger of improper use of the privilege, while I have urged and aided the effort to enact laws that would authorize and properly control such development.

**LABOR LEGISLATION**—I believe in the organization of labor and have always aided in legislation to protect the weak against wrong. I worked for the passage of the law intended to destroy the evil of child labor. The recent decision of the Supreme Court rendered by a majority of one as to the constitutionality of that law does not end the fight. We must pass legislation not open to the criticism of this decision. I supported the Seamen's Bill, which relieved American sailors of a slavery descended from the days of the galleys and gave them the civil rights which we all enjoy, and which made the following of the sea a career worthy of our young men.

**PROHIBITION**—The liquor traffic from top to bottom is wasteful. It should be abolished as a war-time necessity to conserve food, fuel, transportation facilities and man power needed to win the war. The saving, good in war time, is good at all times, and this demoralizing influence should never be permitted to return to curse our people.

**CIVIL SERVICE REFORM**—I have always favored the extension of the civil service, which means the abolishment of partisanship in high places and of the turning over of high offices as a reward for partisan political effort. I spent much time and effort on a bill that would have classified the postoffice as a business and prevented its use as a feeding trough for politicians.

**FREE SPEECH**—The right of free speech and a free press are the fundamental cornerstones of human liberty, and no free government can long exist without them. I have opposed giving to the Postmaster General some of the powers that have been conferred upon him. Instead of assisting to win the war, such power when arbitrarily used will divide our people and tend to destroy the democracy at home that our soldiers are fighting to establish in Europe.

**IRRIGATION**—I have always supported legislation tending to develop irrigation in the West. I have personally inspected all the government irrigation projects and proposed projects on both sides of the North Platte River, and it will be conceded by those who know that I have at least been partially instrumental in the extension of those governmental activities in our State.

I have advocated in the senate, as well as in Nebraska, that the government should pay a part of the expense incurred in the construction of all irrigation dams that hold back flood waters from the Mississippi River, thus making it unnecessary at Government expense to build levees farther down the stream.

**RAILROADS**—I favored taking over the railroads by the President, and voted for the bill that gave him that authority; but I opposed to the limit of my ability the bill that authorized the President to pay these railroads the average dividends of the three pre-war years, which constitute a higher dividend than any three successive years in the history of the country. It means in our State the payment to the Union Pacific of about 10 per cent, to the Northwestern over 10 per cent, and to the Burlington over 22 per cent.

**CONCLUSION**—These are some of the principal things for which I have worked since I have been in public life. The record of my service in the past is the promise I make to the people for the future. To all conscientious, honest and loyal citizens who agree with me in the political policies for which I stand, and in earnest support of which I have given all the years of my public service, I appeal for vindication and support. If I am re-elected I will be under obligations only to the thousands of citizens who gave me their support because of their belief in the righteousness of our cause. My success will be yours, and my failure likewise will be yours. In the last analysis your decision is the supreme law, and by your judgment I will cheerfully abide.

*G. W. Norris*

### LIVE STOCK MEN THANK NORRIS

Dear Sir: We wish to express our appreciation of the active and intelligent interest you have taken in the great agricultural problems confronting the country, and especially your efforts, during the past year, toward placing the live stock industry on a sound basis. Your long experience in Congress and your thorough understanding of these problems make you a most valuable asset to the stockmen of the country. We consider that the effective work you have done constitutes patriotic service of a very high order.

(Signed) H. A. JASTRO, EDWARD L. BURKE, IKE T. PRYOR, JOS. M. CAREY.

Chicago, Sept. 17, 1918.

NOTE—Those signing the above letter to Senator Norris include the most prominent members of the American National Live Stock Association. Mr. Pryor is president; Mr. Jastro is chairman of the market committee; Mr. Burke and Mr. Carey (former United States Senator from Wyoming) are members of the committee. The association as a body makes no political recommendations. Such a statement from those most active in the contest against the control of the packers is worthy of careful consideration.

I might cite as evidence of the fact that he has stood for the best things in our legislation some of the measures that have had his assistance, viz.: He fought for a national child labor law; he fought for prohibition and all other measures for social and industrial justice. He fought pork in appropriation bills. He has fought the profiteer and insisted that taxes be levied in proportion to the ability of people to pay; that the great war profits should be a heavy proportion of the expense of the war, and naturally these things have aroused enmity, and powerful interests undoubtedly will do everything within their power to defeat this representative of the people and take him out of the halls of Congress. The people of the Nation outside of the State of Nebraska and who are not interested in special privileges have the right to urge the people from Nebraska to return Senator Norris to the Senate that he may there continue to act as the champion of everything that helps the average, everyday man and woman in this country and everything that makes for a better nation along all industrial and social lines.

Sept. 12, 1918. (Signed) WM. S. KENYON.

**BORAH OF IDAHO**—I have been an admirer of George Norris ever since he began his distinguished career in the House. He was one of the pioneers of the progressive movement at the Capital. I have been closely associated with him and his friends since he entered the Senate. He is a clean, courageous and patriotic public servant. There is no man who more faithfully and persistently urges legislation in behalf of the general public and the people than George Norris. He is able in debate, and exceedingly efficient and industrious in committee.

I believe in him absolutely as a man and as a public servant, and hope he will continue to be in the place which he now occupies.

Aug. 5, 1918. (Signed) W. E. BORAH.

**JOHNSON OF CALIFORNIA**—I do not assume to interfere in your local politics, and, obviously, I do not speak in disparagement of any person. When, however, a public servant has demonstrated his worth and his high character, when he has rendered signal and lasting and valuable service to his country, it would be a poor colleague who would not in simple justice state the facts.

George W. Norris is one of the cleanest, finest, ablest and most industrious Senators. He is ever alert and active, always on the job. He decides without fear or favor, for the right, as he sees it. No power can sway, no influence avert him from a course his conscience and his patriotism determine. His unquestioned ability, his rugged and fearless honesty, his keen insight and understanding, have won for him one of the high places in the United States Senate. His representation of the State of Nebraska has given added luster to the fame of Nebraska's great sons. His loss to the Senate would be the Nation's loss.

Aug. 11, 1918. (Signed) HIRAM W. JOHNSON.

**CUMMINS OF IOWA**—As the campaign for election of United States Senators is drawing near I feel that I must express my deep interest in Senator Norris' success. My interest is both political and personal. In view of the grave and difficult problems of a domestic character which we must confront the moment peace comes, I want to see a Republican majority in the Senate to deal with them; for I believe that whatever may be the differences between members of our party, the party is fundamentally sound and can bring about the necessary readjustments with more justice and wisdom than any other.

I want to see Senator Norris re-elected, because he stands always for humanity first, and is willing to fight for his convictions; and if the Republican party is to endure and recover its supremacy, for which we are working and hoping, it will reward men of his type by renewing their commissions for service to the Nation. His industry, fidelity and influence have been conspicuous from the beginning, and I sincerely hope

NOTE—The purpose of the National Popular Government League of Washington, D. C., is to promote legislation, state and national, which will help to abolish political corruption and place more direct power over their government in the hands of the people. It is strictly non-partisan. Its president is U. S. Senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma. Senator Norris is a member of the Executive Committee. Mr. King, its secretary, has worked in nearly every state of the union for the league measure and has a wide knowledge of public men and what they stand for in the political life of the nation.

I wish the people of Nebraska could sit as in some vast theater and watch Congress at work on the stage. If they could then get behind the curtain and see the lobbyists at work, watch the wire pullers shifting scenery and creating false issues; note the promoters—the monopolists, water power grabbers, land thieves, railroad lawyers and the rest, all too often directing the play and casting the plot—if the people could see all this, they would appreciate, as never before, what Senator Norris means to them and the nation and there would be no question as to his return.

For they would find him always with a small group of fearless men putting the Common Good above "politics" and representing the people, not the trusts.

Do you think THIS crowd yelling "disloyal" at Norris from Wall Street to Omaha are sincere? If so, why their silence at the reactionaries who voted against war? When did they work for the people? When did they become the only patriots? I tell you that right now they are causing trouble and fighting the President's war policies as expressed in the Trade Commission, the War Labor Board, Daniels, Baker and Creel. Norris is supporting these. When the President talks of a League of Nations to end war forever, and removing the economic causes of war THEY are silent. Norris is for it.

The President demands suffrage as a war measure. Some senators will oppose it still. Will they call Norris "traitor" now?

Big business shouts for democracy in Europe—but no increase of it here, hence they fight Norris. The people want both. The President has too much democracy to suit the interests; he can never have too much to suit Norris. I have worked with him for six years and know him. He fights to end political corruption and give you more power to govern yourselves. That is the test of a true American and a true Republican.

And he proved his faith by his words in March, 1917, when the storm of abuse was fiercest, by telling the Governor of Nebraska he would resign if he would call a special election and let the voters decide whether he was representing their will or not. The request was refused.

Commercialism is trying to capture our government—for reaction now, for the peace table and for the next generation. Every forward looking person who knows the game is calling—send Norris back. What will Nebraska do? Washington, Sept. 30.

### Against Political Corruption

By Edwin S. Potter, Associate Editor "The Searchlight on Congress."

NOTE—The National Voters' League of Washington, D. C., is a non-partisan organization which furnishes unbiased records of members of Congress and prepares summaries of the results for each session. Mr. Potter, the able associate editor of the League's journal, knows the "inside" as few men do.

George W. Norris served in the House from 1908 to 1913 as Representative from the Fifth Nebraska District. Since then as Senator. In the House he was an independent Republican with progressive ideas. He stood for open committee hearings; against caucus domination; and in 1910 led and won the celebrated fight against machine rule in the House, which won national attention and approval. He resisted what is known as "special privilege" legislation and favored measures promoting agriculture and the interests of labor. He was known and appreciated as a hard worker.

The same tendencies have marked his Senate career. As to diligence, our tabulations show that he ranks among the eight highest senators in voting at roll calls; in committee work and floor attendance.

Of more importance the records show he was not absent when crucial and important questions were being decided, and did not shirk responsibility. Few Senators spend as much time as he in study and critical analysis of pending law. He is apt in discerning and pointing out "jokers."

In reaching conclusions he is cautious, but open-minded with respect for facts, and firm when once decided. He is the despair of the lobbyist, the party caucus and party whip, since he cannot be induced, for either party or personal advantage, to support a measure his judgment or conscience disapproves.

The significant factor in Norris' long record is his consistency. Hundreds of test votes show him always against political corruption or corporation intrigue and always for what he thought the welfare of the masses.

Norris is without prejudice against big business as such, but he objects to giving unfair advantage by law to them as against small business and the public.

He is not progressive before election and reactionary after. He does not straddle vexing issues nor dodge voting on them. He is a force to be reckoned with, but not spectacular nor a self advertiser.

He thinks with and votes for the majority of the people, but not blindly nor for political effect since he has opposed laws considered popular, either because he thought them wrong in principle or containing "jokers" which made them farcical. There is no more severe test of courage than this, as such action is almost sure to be misunderstood until the people know the truth, which is difficult for them with the press controlled as it is.

If consideration for and devotion to the will and welfare of a majority of the people be held the standard by which to judge, then no member of Congress stands higher than Senator Norris. His broad, far-sighted views and steadfast courage in fighting for them classify him as a statesman and builder as distinguished from a self-seeking politician or political servitor.

disturb his former attitude toward the war, his associates in Washington all know that there is no man more determined than he that this world struggle shall be fought through to a complete and crushing victory over Germany and that the German military system shall be forever destroyed.

Sept. 17, 1918. (Signed) ALBERT B. CUMMINS.

**JONES OF WASHINGTON**—I sat next to Senator Norris during his first term in the House of Representatives. I came to know him well. His devotion to the best interests of his people and his courageous adherence to what he believed to be right won my highest respect. That same courage and devotion have marked his service in the Senate and no one who knows him doubts his honesty and sincerity of purpose or questions his patriotism. In the Senate I have been brought in intimate touch with him in connection with temperance and prohibition legislation. He has been one of the most earnest and effective workers for temperance legislation and we can always depend upon him to do all he can and what is best on this important subject.

Senator Norris keeps in touch with the hopes and aspirations of the people. He is fully abreast of the humane sentiment of the times. The welfare of the people is his controlling guide in his official action. Believing as I do that the application of the fundamental principles of Republicanism is essential to the highest welfare of the country during and after the war, I cannot urge too strongly his re-election to the Senate. With the close of the war, we will be confronted by questions that will require their proper decision, the highest courage, the truest devotion to principle and the most patriotic love for country than can be shown. Senator Norris can be depended upon to show these high qualities.

Sept. 15, 1918. (Signed) W. L. JONES.

# SENATORS FREE FROM CORPORATION CONTROL INDORSE NORRIS

**LENROOT OF WISCONSIN**—Senator Norris is for the vigorous prosecution of the war to victory. His loyalty to the United States cannot be questioned by anyone who knows him. If I did not believe that he would resist peace until German militarism is crushed, I would not write this indorsement.

The Republicans of Nebraska have shown their confidence in him by nominating him for re-election.

I have known George Norris for ten years. I was closely associated with him during his service in the House and I know the man. His one motive is to be of service, to do what he can to make this country better, not for a few of us, but for all of us. During all the years I have known him he has been a brave and consistent fighter against special privilege and for justice for all the people. He has made mistakes, as have all of us, but he has never considered personal advantage in anything that he has done.

Norris can be relied upon to support all measures necessary for the prosecution of the war, and when the war is over he can be relied upon to fight with ability both the forces of reaction and the forces of destruction that will be seeking to control the government. He has helped and will continue to help make the Republican Party the instrument through which a greater degree of justice, a wider measure of liberty shall be secured by and for the American people.

Sept. 17, 1918. (Signed) IRVINE L. LENROOT.

**KENYON OF IOWA**—I have served six years in the Senate with George W. Norris. I know the man, his viewpoint upon legislation, and I have frequently said, as I am glad to say now, that there is no truer representative of the people's interest in the American Congress than George W. Norris. There are no underground wires from the citadels of special privilege reaching and affecting him in legislation.

I believe in him absolutely as a man and as a public servant, and hope he will continue to be in the place which he now occupies.

Aug. 5, 1918. (Signed) W. E. BORAH.

**JOHNSON OF CALIFORNIA**—I do not assume to interfere in your