

By Christine Scalora

Nebraska News Service

In addition to Attorney General Jon Bruning, State Sen. Deb Fischer, former investment adviser Pat Flynn, former U.S. Senator Bob Kerrey and Treasurer Don Stenberg, five others will be on the May 15 primary ballot.

Some have run for office before; others were motivated by specific issues to get involved.

Larry Marvin, a 73-year-old landlord from Fremont, wants to give Nebraska voters more choice and competition. A Democrat, Marvin has run in various elections across the state before.

"I think that it's our civic duty to be involved," he said in a phone interview.

To Marvin, the biggest issue of the campaign is the middle class tax cut.

He doesn't like the term, and he said the cut takes away from widows, orphans and Social Security.

"I want to put the message out that whenever a politician or a news media person says middle class that I think they're selling the rest of us down the drain," he said. "We're all first class."

Democrat Sherman Yates, 66, of Lincoln, said he wants to bring a new way of thinking to Washington, D.C.

For agriculture, he suggests an "agri-tower" to increase the amount of crop production without using more land.

"Six-thousand acres grown on 40 acres of land," he said in a phone interview. "That is a wise decision."

Yates said he hasn't asked for donations to run for the office.

Democrat Steven Lustgarten, a 60-year-old from Omaha who has worked various jobs in the filmmaking industry, was motivated to run because of the Supreme Court's ruling in the Citizens United case.

"Only the very, very rich are being able to compete in the political sphere," he said in a phone interview. He also expressed concern that anonymous donors could contribute.

Campaign finance reform is the biggest issue in the campaign for Lustgarten. Public financing of campaigns could alleviate the problem, he said.

Republican Spencer Zimmerman, 32, served in the Air Force at Offutt Air Base. Right now he divides his time between Omaha and Wisconsin, and he works as a truck driver and a limousine chauffeur.

He got involved in politics in 2008, as he watched the nation's debt grow. He's run for state assembly in Wisconsin and various local levels of politics, he said in a phone interview.

"I just felt that the country was heading in the wrong direction," he said.

For Zimmerman, the economy is an important issue of the campaign.

He supports the Keystone XL pipeline, would like to see the health care law signed by President Obama repealed and would like to see a 22.5 percent flat tax on Americans and businesses.

Republican Sharyn Elander, 48, of Lincoln, is the administrator of the nonprofit Real Red Daisies, which works to get convicted sex offenders off of Facebook.

This is her first run for political office, she said in a phone interview. Abortion has become the most important issue for her during her campaign. She thinks the process of life begins at 21 days, when a fetus has a beating heart.

"I personally would like to see abortion where people would chose not to do it...I think possibly

we need to educate more,” she said.

Campaign finance reports filed with the Federal Election Commission show that as of March 31, the most recent data available, Marvin had received contributions totally about \$15,500 and Lustgarten had received about \$6,250.

Candidates are not required to file financial reports if they have received or spent less than \$5,000. Elander, Yates and Zimmerman have not filed reports with the FEC.