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Ricketts Imports Senator Who Exported Nebraska Jobs

LINCOLN, Neb. - Pete Ricketts has announced he will hold a fundraiser with South Dakota Senator John Thune tonight. Thune is the same senator whose politicking cost Nebraska an Air Force financial services call center and more than 700 new jobs.

Earlier this year, the Offutt Air Force Base bid to be home to the call center. Despite the many advantages of housing such a center in Omaha – including a technically-savvy workforce, a large number of trained telemarketing professionals, and a population base of 813,000 – the center was designated for Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, South Dakota, population 60,000. [Omaha World Herald, 4/11/2006]

The lobbying for Ellsworth was lead by Thune.

At the time, two members of Nebraska's congressional delegation, including Representative Lee Terry, said that the decision was politically motivated. Terry stated, "It's obvious that this decision was not based on reasonable criteria."

"John Thune's politicking cost Nebraska more than 700 jobs, yet Pete Ricketts and the Nebraska Republican Party is feting him at a fundraiser in Grand Island," said Barry Rubin, Executive Director of the Nebraska Democratic Party. "This is typical behavior for Ricketts. He's advocated a national sales tax that would raise taxes on 95% of Nebraskans but cuts his taxes and he's proposed privatizing Social Security which would increase the debt by more than \$2 trillion but reap billions in fees for financial services firms like Ameritrade. Now he's accepting money and support from someone who cost Nebraskans jobs. His priorities are clear – he doesn't put Nebraska first."

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