

Tony Vargas voted to allow those convicted of serious violent crimes like domestic assault, sexual assault on a child, and armed robbery to be released from prison early. Vargas also voted against mandatory minimum sentencing for other serious drug felonies, such as dealing methamphetamine, heroin, and cocaine.

In 2020, Vargas Voted In Favor Of LB1004. ([LB1004](#), Passed 29 – 11, 8/13/20, Vargas Voted Yea)

- **LB1004 Would Allow Prison Inmates To Become Eligible For Parole Two Years Before Their Mandatory Release Date.** “The parole measure, LB1004, was introduced by Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha to allow prison inmates to become eligible for parole two years before their mandatory release date. Lathrop had said the bill would give inmates more incentive to behave and complete rehabilitation programs, and getting more inmates under parole supervision made it more likely that they would adjust successfully.” (Paul Hammel, “Ricketts Vetoes Bill On Witnessing Executions, Measure Offering Earlier Parole Eligibility,” [Omaha World-Herald](#), 8/18/20)
- **In August 2020, Governor Pete Ricketts Vetoes LB1004 Out Of Concern For Public Safety.** “The parole measure, LB 1004, was introduced by Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha to allow prison inmates to become eligible for parole two years before their mandatory release date... But Ricketts said he was vetoing the bill in the name of public safety.” (Paul Hammel, “Ricketts Vetoes Bill On Witnessing Executions, Measure Offering Earlier Parole Eligibility,” [Omaha World-Herald](#), 8/18/20)
- **Ricketts Criticized The Bill As It Would Allow Criminals Convicted Of Serious And Violent Crimes – Such As Domestic Assault, Sexual Assault On A Child, And Robbery – To Be Eligible For Earlier Parole.** “Inmates incarcerated for serious and violent crimes like domestic assault, sexual assault on a child and armed robbery will be eligible for earlier parole under this bill,’ he said in his veto letter. Ricketts also vetoed the accompanying appropriations bill for LB 1004, saying it would raise costs for the Parole Board and prisons.” (Paul Hammel, “Ricketts Vetoes Bill On Witnessing Executions, Measure Offering Earlier Parole Eligibility,” [Omaha World-Herald](#), 8/18/20)
- **Ricketts Criticized The Bill As Flawed Because It Was Not Limited To Low-Level Offenders.** “Under this bill, Nebraska prisoners would have automatically become eligible for parole within two years of their mandatory discharge date. The bill, sponsored by Senator Steve Lathrop, also would have required caseload standards for parole services and annual reports to the legislature. Ricketts said the bill was flawed because it was not limited to low-level offenders. Ricketts also vetoed the funding bill for the proposal, saying the measure failed to provide additional money for parole officers to supervise the added number of parolees.” (“Ricketts Vetoes Death Penalty, Prison Reform And School-Related Bills,” [KETV 7 Omaha](#), 8/17/20)

In 2017, Vargas Voted In Favor Of Advancing LB447. ([LB447](#), Passed 25-22-1, 3/8/17, Vargas Voted Yes)

- **As Original Written, LB447 Would Have Ended Mandatory Minimum Sentences For Nearly All Class IC And ID Felonies—Including Gun Crimes, Drive-By Shootings, Assaults On Police And Corrections Officers, Manufacturing Of Child Pornography, And Hate Crimes.** “As written, the bill would have ended mandatory minimum sentences for nearly all Class IC and ID felonies, which include gun crimes, drive-by shootings, assaults on police and corrections officers, manufacturing of child pornography, and hate crimes.” (Joe Duggan, “Bill To Repeal Mandatory Minimums For Drug Offenders Won’t Be Debated More This Year But Will Remain Alive For 2018,” [Omaha World-Herald](#), 5/5/17)
- **LB447 Was Amended To Only Repeal Mandatory Minimum Penalties For Serious Drug Penalties, Such As Dealing Methamphetamine, Heroin, And Cocaine.** “But it was amended during first-round debate to repeal mandatory penalties only for serious drug felonies, such as dealing methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine.” (Joe Duggan, “Bill To Repeal Mandatory Minimums For Drug Offenders Won’t Be Debated More This Year But Will Remain Alive For 2018,” [Omaha World-Herald](#), 5/5/17)
- **LB447 Died In The Legislature And Did Not Reach The Governor’s Desk.** (LB447, [Nebraska Legislature](#), Accessed 5/5/24)