

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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Gale announces initiatives reach signature thresholds

LINCOLN – Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale announced today that the four initiatives filed by Keep the Money in Nebraska, a pro-gambling group, had reached the thresholds of signatures to be placed on the Nov. 2 general election ballot.

“We will now move ahead to meet our deadlines under the law to place these initiatives on the ballot for November 2nd,” Gale said. He said he planned to certify the four measures for the ballot on Sept. 10th.

To be placed on the ballot, a constitutional initiative requires valid signatures equaling 10 percent of registered voters (111,710 signatures) and a statutory initiative requires valid signatures equaling 7 percent of registered voters (78,197 signatures). In addition, an initiative is required to include 5 percent of the registered voters of two-fifths (38) of the 93 counties.

The ballot questions (as prepared by the Attorney General) for the four initiatives submitted by Keep the Money in Nebraska are as follows:

Initiative Measure 417

Shall the Nebraska Constitution be amended to provide that the people may enact laws by initiative measure to provide for the authorization, operation, regulation, and taxation of all forms of games of chance?

This measure had over 128,000 valid signatures.

Initiative Measure 418

Shall the Nebraska Constitution be amended to provide that the Legislature shall not amend, repeal, modify, or impair a law enacted by the people by initiative, except upon a vote of at least two-thirds of all the members of the Legislature?

This measure had over 127,000 valid signatures.

Initiative Measure 419

Shall a statute be enacted which: (1) establishes an annual tax on gross gaming revenue generated at permitted locations of 36% of the first \$15 million and 20% of gross gaming revenue exceeding \$15 million; (2) distributes 75% of gaming tax revenues from casinos to the State and 25% to the community authorizing such gaming; (3) distributes 25% of gaming tax revenues at other permitted locations to the State and 75% to the authorizing community or communities; (4) establishes a \$100 annual gaming license fee on each operator per permitted location?

This measure had over 88,000 valid signatures.

Initiative Measure 420

Shall a statute be enacted which: (1) permits communities (A) all games of chance at casinos in hotels near the border in metropolitan class cities, (B) the use of gaming devices at casinos, strategic premises where at least 250 of such devices are operated, and racetracks, and (C) the use of limited gaming devices at casinos, strategic premises, racetracks and establishments which sell liquor for consumption on the premises; (2) establishes the numbers of such casinos and gaming devices which may be operated in various locations; and (3) establishes a Nebraska Gaming Commission to regulate such gaming?

This measure had over 92,000 valid signatures.

After petitions are submitted to the secretary of state's office, county election offices have the job of verifying petition signatures. Verification continued until the measures had reached 110% of the required threshold.

Once an initiative is certified for the ballot, the secretary of state's office is required to produce an informational pamphlet on the issue. The pamphlets for the four measures should be available around Sept. 15th. Included in the pamphlet is the text of each measure, the ballot language, and brief arguments in favor and opposed to each measure. While the Secretary of State is responsible for the pamphlet, the public may submit arguments for or against any of the measures. Any submitted material should be limited to 125 words per measure and sent to Secretary of State John Gale, Suite 2300, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE 68509. Submissions must be received no later than September 3rd to be considered.

There also is a requirement that a public hearing on a ballot initiative be held in each congressional district. Hearings for the four measures will be scheduled during the six weeks prior to the election.

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