

# **STATE OF NEBRASKA**

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## **Gale urges personal pledge on July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday**

LINCOLN – Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale urged citizens to take time during the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday period to renew their Pledge of Allegiance “to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands.”

Gale encouraged citizens to think about two areas of good citizenship: voting and running for office.

“We’ve seen a steady decline in voting participation in Nebraska and elsewhere in the country,” he said. “For the health of our democracy, we need to reverse this trend.

“I would encourage all citizens to pledge to be frequent voters. Start now by thinking about the upcoming November general election and commit yourself to go to the polls.”

Encouraging citizens to run for public office also needs to be a high priority, Gale said.

“We cannot keep the level of elective government in Nebraska that we have previously sustained if citizens won’t run for these offices,” he said. “Without local candidates, local government disappears and is replaced by more centralized government. That is not a good trend in a democracy.”

Gale noted that the genius of the Declaration of Independence is evident in its emphasis of two fundamental democratic principles: (1) government exists for the benefit of the people and not their rulers and (2) all men and women are created equal with certain unalienable rights.

“The Declaration of Independence should serve as a continuing inspiration to us,” he said. “Read it to your children. Talk about it. And then set an example by voting and running for office.”

The July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday traditionally has been observed through family-oriented events, such as parades, fireworks, get-togethers and recreational activities, Gale said.

“These family events are great ways to celebrate the holiday,” he said. “But I think we owe it to the country’s founders and the future of our nation to use the holiday to pledge a new personal declaration to our democratic society.”

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