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NEWS RELEASE
Sept. 16, 2004

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Program encourages students to be lifelong voters

LINCOLN – Registration has began for classes to enroll in Nebraska Student Vote, an innovative program sponsored by the Nebraska secretary of state’s office and the Omaha World-Herald that combines civics instruction with a mock election.

“I view programs like this as critically important to the future health of our democracy,” said Secretary of State John Gale.

“We need to reverse the disturbing trend of voter apathy. Through Nebraska Student Vote, we hope to encourage students to become active citizens and lifelong voters,” said Gale.

“Our partnership with the Nebraska secretary of state’s office is a valuable alliance, which instills the importance of voting in our youth,” said John Gottschalk, president and publisher of the World-Herald. “In turn, we are helping to build a generation of educated voters.”

The program is designed for grades four through 12. Teachers can get information about the program and register their classes online at www.nestudentvote.com.

The program provides students with instructional guides, as well as copies of the Omaha World-Herald every Wednesday from Oct. 6 through Nov. 10. Teachers are provided with a complete curriculum that incorporates discussions and lessons.

Students will cast their votes in a mock election during the period of Oct. 25-28. Results will be reported on the Nebraska Student Vote website and sent to the National Mock Election program.

The Nebraska program had about 90,000 students participate in 2002. During the 2002 election, Nebraska had the third highest turnout for the National Mock Election, beating out higher population states like California and Texas.

“This program teaches students some of the basics of government, increases their understanding of democracy and gives them experience in voting,” Gale said. “It’s a terrific program that can create excitement about the election process for students and teachers.”

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