

STATE OF NEBRASKA
John A. Gale
Secretary of State

P.O. Box 94608
State Capitol, Suite 2300
Lincoln, NE 68509-4608
Phone: 402-471-2554
Fax: 402-471-3237
www.sos.state.ne.us

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CONTACT: Sharon Hambek
402-471-6044, shambek@nol.org

Secretary of State urges reflection on Veterans Day

LINCOLN – As the nation observes Veterans Day, Nebraska Secretary of State John Gale urged Nebraskans to pause and reflect on the extraordinary contributions and sacrifices of the American men and women who have served in our armed forces.

“The United States sits in a position of great strength today because our military through the years has protected our security and our democratic ideals. Our military personnel have made the sacrifices to ensure that future generations in the United States and elsewhere can enjoy their freedoms,” Gale said.

“It also would be most fitting to remember the brave Americans who have served and are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan,” he said. “We grieve for those Americans who have been killed in these conflicts. For our military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan, we pray for their safety and a successful completion of their missions.”

The 2000 U.S. census showed that there were 26.4 million veterans and that 84 percent were registered to vote, according to Gale.

“Not only have they defended our American democracy, they are some of our best citizens,” he said. “They make sure their votes count.”

The secretary of state’s office is very supportive of Nebraska programs sponsored by the American Legion – Girls State, Boys State and County Government Day events.

The office tabulates votes cast for offices at Girls State and Boys State. Gale speaks to high school student each year at several County Government Day events. Recently, he spoke at such events in Cass, Otoe and Lancaster counties, talking about citizenship and democracy.

As a tribute to veterans, the secretary of state's office operates its Vote in Honor of a Veteran program. The centerpiece of the program is a 45-minute video that features the heroic story of Bernard W. Nider of Lincoln, who was one of the first liberators to reach the hard-fought Omaha Beach at Normandy, France, on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

“By telling the experiences of Nebraska veterans who protected our country and the freedoms we cherish, we hope our young people will be able to personalize the importance of being active citizens and lifelong voters,” Gale said.

The video is designed for civics, social studies and history classes, as well as for veterans and community groups. The video's message is appropriate for any time of the year.

Nebraska high schools and education service units have copies of the video for class use. Copies of the video also were distributed to county clerks/election commissioners and county veterans service officers throughout the state for community use.

For further information about the video, contact Sharon Hambek at shambek@nol.org or (402) 471-6044.

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