



From the Office of Secretary of State

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Election Day voting by hospital patients needs tracking

LINCOLN – Secretary of State John Gale is recommending changes to a portion of Nebraska election law that deals with providing ballots to people in nursing homes and hospitals on Election Day.

Testifying today in support of LB433, Gale told the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee that adopting the procedures as suggested in the measure would help reduce opportunities for abuse or election fraud.

“It’s possible and in fact, likely, that with an aging baby boomer population, more of our registered voters will be in nursing homes and hospitals on Election Day,” observed Gale. “If they’ve been regular voters during their lifetime it’s likely they will want to vote, if they are able, in pending elections as well.”

As it stands, the county election commissioner or county clerk may train registered voters to act on behalf of their office in administering those ballots. They must be delivered by two registered voters who are not in the same political party. The county election officials must also file their plan for distributing those ballots with the Secretary of State’s office prior to the election.

Under the proposed measure, following the election, county election officials would also be required to provide a report to the Secretary of State’s office indicating how many ballots were cast, the name and the party affiliation of those trained to administer the ballots, the name and address of the nursing home or hospital

involved and any other information as requested. The report would need to be filed within 60 days following any statewide primary, general or special election.

"This further assures that the ballot process carried out in nursing homes and hospitals is completely fair and impartial," said Gale. "This adds a layer of transparency to these programs that currently does not exist and it provides us with the information necessary to investigate further if there are questions or suspicions about those ballots."

LB433 is sponsored by Senator Scott Price of Bellevue.

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