



## From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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### **Nebraskans change parties and vote early ahead of primary**

LINCOLN – Nearly 10,000 Nebraskans have voted early in the primary election. That number includes ballots received in the mail as well as those who have voted at their county election offices in person, says Secretary of State John Gale.

Of the 9,275 ballots cast during the first 10 days of early voting, 5,083 are from registered Republicans and 3,490 are from Democrats. Nearly 700 nonpartisan voters have also cast their ballots. Only five Libertarians have voted early in the state.

More than 38,500 Nebraskans have asked to receive an early ballot to vote in the May primary.

“Obviously, there are a significant number of ballots that are out there in the hands of voters currently. Those requests continue to be received every day,” said Gale.

Gale reminds voters there are deadlines associated with returning those ballots.

Early voting ballots that are mailed in must be received at the county election office by the close of polls on Election Day, May 13. The same is true for any ballots that are hand-delivered. They must be returned to the county election office by the time polls close.

Early voters may vote in person at their county election office up until the close of business on May 12.

“While a majority of people still vote at the polls on Election Day, early voting has certainly proven to offer a real convenience to voters,” said Gale. “It allows voters to receive a ballot and then think about the choices they want to make, before mailing it back in. Hopefully during that time, voters are studying the candidates and issues relevant to them.”

Gale said since January, his office has noted that more than 8,000 registered voters in Nebraska have changed their party affiliation.

“Around 4,300 voters have changed from other parties to Republican. More than 2,000 have become Independents and 1,300 now say they are Democrats.”

Gale explained that it’s hard to know the key reason that a significant number of voters have changed their party affiliation since January to Republican. “I can speculate that having a strong Republican U.S. Senate race and a crowded field of Republican candidates vying for the gubernatorial race are strong influences. But to what extent that’s a factor, it’s hard to know.”

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