



**From the Office of Secretary of State**

**John Gale**

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**Requests for early voting ballots on rise for 2014 Nebraska primary**

LINCOLN – In the first five days of early voting for the 2014 primary, 23,447 requests have been made for early voting ballots, says Secretary of State John Gale. That's the highest number of early voting ballots requested during a five day period in the last four Nebraska primaries.

"It certainly indicates that Nebraska voters are interested in early voting and more people are taking advantage of that option," said Gale. Of the requests made, 2,525 ballots have been returned to county election offices so far.

In the first five days of early voting in the 2012 primary, 23,182 requests for ballots were submitted. In the 2010 primary, 18,548 requests were made and in 2008, there were 480 requests during that same time frame.

"The campaigns and third parties have certainly become more active in pushing for early votes," said Gale. "That transition started to happen right around 2008 and has continued ever since."

Up until the law was changed in 1999, early voting was referred to as absentee voting in Nebraska. Voters were required to indicate their reason for requesting an early voting ballot, before that request was processed. That's not so anymore.

“Eliminating the justification for receiving an early voting ballot has made the process easier for voters,” added Gale. “They can even track the status of their vote each step of the way.”

Through the Voter Information Center on the Secretary of State’s website, registered voters can see when their ballot request was received, when it was mailed out and the date the ballot was returned to the county election office. The Voter Information Center is found under the “Elections” tab at [www.sos.ne.gov](http://www.sos.ne.gov).

“That’s a good way for voters to double check to ensure their ballots were received and processed. If there is no return date, then the voter should call their county election office to see if there’s a problem,” said Gale.

Registered voters in Nebraska can request an early voting ballot 120 days prior to the election. The first wave of ballots went out April 7. They are due back into the county election offices by the time polls close on Election Day.

Gale said it’s important that people take their early voting ballots to the election office. They will not be accepted at polling sites on Election Day.

“If someone requests an early voting ballot but does not return it by Election Day, they can show up at their polling place to vote, however, they will be given a provisional ballot. Once it’s confirmed that their early voting ballot was not received, the provisional ballot will be counted, explained Gale.

Now through May 12, Nebraska voters can also vote in person at their county election office.

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