



From the Office of Secretary of State

John Gale

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### **Strong turnout expected for Nebraska primary**

LINCOLN – Thirty percent of registered Nebraskans are expected to vote in the primary on May 13, according to the prediction issued by Secretary of State John Gale. Gale says he expects turnout will be strongest among Republicans, at around 44 percent.

There are 1,152,180 Nebraskans registered for the primary. Gale said he expects around 20 percent of Democrats will vote and 12 percent of nonpartisan voters will cast a ballot. Turnout among registered Libertarians should reach 20 percent.

"It's not a precise science obviously," explained Gale. "However, we do look at certain factors when forecasting turnout – things like early voting, what participation has been like historically, the nature of the races that are being contested and we also consult with the county election officials to see what they expect."

In 2006, the race between Republican candidates Tom Osborne and incumbent Dave Heineman proved to be a big draw. "It was a hotly contested and highly visible statewide race, causing a decade high 35 percent of Nebraskans voting in that primary. In 2010, the next non-presidential primary, the turnout was barely over 26 percent without any intense statewide races."

Gale said he expects with a record number of strong contenders in well-financed races in both the U.S. Senate race and the governor's race, it will likely fuel

considerable activity at the polls. "That's our hope, that voters will feel engaged, not just in these statewide races but also those races that directly impact their own communities."

As of May 5 there have been more than 54,000 requests for early voting ballots and 28,052 people have voted early, either in person or by mail.

"In the 2010 primary, we had 33,485 requests for early voting ballots in the same period," Gale observed. "Obviously, more and more citizens like the flexibility afforded by requesting a ballot early. However, it's interesting to note just how many ballots have not been turned in yet for this primary. I suspect that voters are taking time to make their final selections, despite the fact they already have their ballots in hand."

Early voting ballots that are mailed in must be received at the county election office by the close of polls on Election Day. 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 the county election office up until the close of business on May 12.

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