



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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Sec. Gale receives petitions for death penalty referendum

LINCOLN – Organizers of a referendum petition effort to repeal a stay on Nebraska’s death penalty say they have turned almost 167,000 signatures to Secretary of State John Gale. The submission comes just days before a new law repealing the state’s death penalty is set to go into effect.

In order to put the issue before voters in the next general election, circulators must have collected verified signatures from five percent of registered voters in 38 counties. To suspend the legislatively-approved repeal, signatures from ten percent of registered voters must be verified, also in 38 counties.

The exact threshold of signatures that organizers must meet will not be known until election officials from all 93 counties verify their voter registration numbers to the Secretary of State’s office.

Gale explained that following that process, petitions will be sorted, date stamped and numbered. Then they will be mailed or delivered to the appropriate county election officials for verification.

“Counties have 40 days from the date they receive the petitions to complete their verification. It is possible to approve a 10 day extension, if necessary. However, based on previous experience, the counties do their best to finish verifying within the initial deadline.”

Once the counties have completed their verification of signatures and the Secretary of State's office has reviewed and confirmed the results, petition organizers will be notified.

The law repealing the death penalty in Nebraska goes into effect August 30.

The last time a referendum petition appeared on the ballot was in 2006 involving the consolidation of Class I school districts.

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