



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

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**Contact:** Laura Strimple

402-471-8408

[laura.strimple@nebraska.gov](mailto:laura.strimple@nebraska.gov)

### **Online voter registration system nearing roll out**

LINCOLN – Nebraska’s new online voter registration application system is intended to roll out to mark National Voter Registration Day on September 22 says Secretary of State John Gale. The system is in the final stages of testing. Gale said the unveiling will mark one of the biggest technological advancements to the state’s voter registration system in several years.

“Creating an online process is one of the greatest leaps toward not only modernizing our state’s voter registration system, but also making the process more convenient and accessible to all of our citizens by computer or by mobile device.”

To date, more than 20 states have implemented online voter registration. Arizona was the first in 2002. The most recent state to go online was Hawaii this month.

Gale added that these states experienced an initial surge in online voter registrations compared to paper registrations, and having online registration available provided a boost in voter registrations overall.

The planning and creation of Nebraska’s online voter registration application system began with the passage of LB 661 in 2014, sponsored by Senator Bob Krist of Omaha. It involved the cooperation and assistance of multiple vendors and state agencies including: the Secretary of State’s office, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO), Election Systems and Software (ES&S) and Nebraska Interactive (NIC).

Essentially the new system will allow use of the applicant's driver's license signature from the DMV. Instead of a wet signature on a paper form that is mailed in and filed, users will allow the DMV to utilize the signature on file from their driver's license, in order to process their voter registration electronically.

"We'll be very excited to have the system up and running in just a few weeks," said Gale. "Having had the opportunity to observe other states that have already implemented online voter registration, we've been able to create a system that is streamlined, secure and will ultimately enable for more accurate record-keeping in our voter registration database."

In addition to promoting the new online system, Gale is also reminding all qualified Nebraskans to observe National Voter Registration Month by registering or updating their registration in September. "It is essential", Gale said, "to have a strong majority of eligible citizens registered and voting at all times to preserve the sense of a government of the people, by the people and for the people."

Gale explained further that "Voter registration seems to surge during presidential elections and then falls off for the gubernatorial cycles. Eligible citizens registered to vote vary between 80 and 85 percent with each cycle. Presidential election year voting varies from 65 to 72 percent and gubernatorial election year voting varies from 45 to 55 percent. We can, and must, do better to preserve the voice of a strong majority of citizens in our elections, whether local special elections or presidential elections. We hope to improve registration and turnout with online voter registration."

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