



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

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### **Horse racing petition comes up short on needed signatures**

LINCOLN – A proposed constitutional amendment tied to games of chance at horse racing facilities will not appear on the general election ballot. Secretary of State John Gale says the number of verified signatures fell short of the number required to put the issue before voters.

Thresholds for placing initiative petitions on the ballot are established based on the number of registered voters the day a petition is turned in. In the case of the constitutional amendment, 117,188 verified signatures were required, or 10 percent of the 1,171,877 registered voters on July 7.

“County election officials accepted 77,956 signatures and rejected 41,710 signatures,” explained Gale. “The counties certified they received 119,666 signatures for verification.”

While the total number of signatures fell short, signatures were collected from five percent of voters in 41 of the state’s 93 counties. The distribution requirement to put an initiative on the ballot is at least 38 counties.

Based on a preliminary analysis of why signatures were rejected, Gale said the largest number was due to signers not being registered in Nebraska or the county indicated on the petition sheet. “That accounted for more than 24,000 signature rejections. Nearly 4,600 signatures were rejected for being duplicates and more than 3,000 signatures were rejected because the signers were not currently registered and were removed from the state’s voter registration system.”

In some counties, like Banner, Kimball, and Sheridan, the number of accepted signatures equaled the number of rejected. No counties had less than a 50 percent validity rate. The county with the highest validity rate was Grant County with nearly 91 percent of signatures accepted. The average validity rate among all counties was just over 65 percent.

Gale said he requested that county election officials verify signatures for the constitutional amendment first. Now, they will finish verifying signatures for the two other statutory initiatives – regulating games of chance and gaming devices at racetracks and establishing a tax on gross gaming revenue.

“We expect that process to take a few more weeks,” continued Gale. “In addition to verifying signatures for those two remaining initiatives, some counties are also finishing work on verifying signatures to place presidential candidate Jill Stein on the ballot.”

A petition to create the Marijuana Party of Nebraska also failed to secure enough signatures for placement on the general ballot.

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