



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

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### **Sec. Gale reminds public of restrictions on use of Great Seal**

LINCOLN – As keeper of the Great Seal of Nebraska, Secretary of State John Gale says its use is strictly limited to official state government business and educational purposes. It cannot be used for political or commercial purposes. Permission to use the seal must be obtained in writing from the Secretary of State.

Candidates are reminded as they ramp up their campaigns leading to the general election, that use of the Great Seal is strictly prohibited for political purposes. He has not heard of any candidates using the seal on campaign materials so far in this election year, but it has happened in past cycles. Any violators will be issued a warning notice from Gale.

“We’ve had a wide range of requests to use the seal recently,” noted Gale. “My concern is that there may be a presumption that the state seal exists in the public domain and can be used for a multitude of purposes or products. That is not the case.”

Gale said he has been taking great care to evaluate requests to use the seal in recent years. “Random uses of the Great Seal for purposes that promote candidates, political causes, commercial products, business logos, or public events can easily mislead the public to believe that such candidates, issues, causes, products, businesses, or activities are endorsed or promoted by the state.”

Gale has been in touch with various businesses as well as individuals who have utilized the state seal on websites and social media pages without permission. Most people have removed those images upon first request.

“In some cases, the image was not even an accurate depiction of the Great Seal. That is concerning in and of itself,” said Gale. “If permission is granted to use the seal it is essential that the image be correct and current.”

Gale notes that as one of the state’s most recognizable symbols, the Great Seal represents the highest virtue and value of the state. As such, it is important to ensure its dignity, integrity and the strict propriety of its use.

“Overuse, improper use, and cheap representations of the seal reduce it to bargain basement value. The meaning of the seal stands for more than that, and will be given the greatest protection possible by my office.”

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