



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

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**Contact:** Laura Strimple

402-471-8408

### **Gaming petitions delivered to Secretary of State for verification**

LINCOLN – Organizers of an effort to legalize horse track gaming operations in Nebraska have dropped off three sets of petitions with Secretary of State John Gale. Those petitions will now be sorted, numbered and sent off to county election officials for signature verification. If enough signatures are collected, the issues will be added to the general election ballot to be voted on in November.

The petitions include an amendment to the state constitution and two changes to state law, paving the way for locating gaming devices at racetracks and taxing the revenue generated. Organizers estimated submitting approximately 130,000 signatures for the constitutional amendment, and 90,000 signatures each for the other two initiatives.

“Because of the volume of petitions circulated in connection with the three ballot issues, we’ve hired temporary workers, who will be assisted by members of the elections staff within my office,” explained Gale.

Each petition page is numbered and then they are mailed or delivered to the appropriate county election official for signature verification. Officials have 40 days from the day they receive their petitions to verify all of the signatures.

“The counties will really be working under a tight deadline, with each one receiving three sets of petitions. That 40 days can fly by fast,” noted Gale.

If necessary, Gale can authorize an additional 10 days of processing.

To include the constitutional amendment on the ballot, 10 percent of signatures must be verified from registered voters. For the statutory measures, the

requirement is seven percent of signatures from registered voters. Additionally, five percent of verified signatures must have been obtained in 38 of the state's 93 counties.

"We determine the signature threshold for each petition type based on the number of registered voters the day the petitions are due," said Gale.

Each county will submit its numbers to the Secretary of State's office at the close of business on Thursday. Tabulation of the statewide voter registration number will be finished on Friday.

Once in the hands of county election officials, the printed name, address, birthdate and signature of each petition signer will be compared with information provided in the voter registration system. They will also check to make sure that petitions weren't signed multiple times by the same individual. If the voter registration is invalid or the information provided by the signer is incorrect or not complete, the signature is not counted.

Gale said that county election officials also check to make sure the circulator's oath is signed and that each petition page is notarized, in addition to other issues that might invalidate the signatures collected.

"Once all counties have finished verifying signatures, my office will review and confirm the results and petition organizers will be notified," said Gale.

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