



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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For Release:

April 23, 2018

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New law allows extra hours for online voter registration

LINCOLN – Nebraskans wishing to register to vote online will have a few extra hours to do so, thanks to a new law initiated by Secretary of State John Gale. Legislative bill 1038, signed by Governor Pete Ricketts, extends the deadline for online voter registration to midnight on April 30.

“I appreciate Senator Theresa Thibodeau championing this bill on behalf of my office. This change provides a definite deadline for online voter registration, which was not specified in law previously,” Gale explained.

The change applies to those dates when online voter registration ends prior to each statewide primary and general election. Due to an emergency clause attached to LB 1038, the law goes into effect immediately. It applies to NEReg2Vote (<https://www.nebraska.gov/apps-sos-voter-registration>) and the online voter registration portal provided through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

“Previously the cut off was 5 p.m. on those dates,” added Gale. “With this modification in law, we’re able to provide voters a few more hours to register or change their voter registration through those sites. Additionally, it should be easier for folks to remember that online voter registration ends at midnight.”

Gale said it was important for users to keep in mind that any new voter registrations or updates received online after midnight on April 30 would not qualify for the May 15 primary. They must be entered before that cutoff.

Online voter registration has been well received since it was first launched in September 2015. Since that time 117,073 voter registrations have been filed through NEReg2Vote. Including new and updated registrations, that number accounts for 16 percent of all voter registrations received.

By far, the majority of voter registrations are submitted through the DMV, accounting for 48 percent of all new and updated registrations. That agency launched online registration in January 2016.

“It’s obvious that when people log onto the DMV to order a duplicate driver’s license or to renew, they are also doing the important task of updating their voter registration,” observed Gale.

Paper forms, including those utilized through the DMV have dropped off significantly, by roughly 65 percent.

“Fewer than 10 percent of voter registrations are submitted through other methods, such as through state agencies or departments offering public assistance or through federal forms utilized by military members and citizens living overseas. While these have traditionally accounted for the lowest percentile of registrations, they do provide alternative methods for ensuring that all citizens can easily register to vote.”

In addition to online voter registration, April 30 is the last day that:

- Mailed in registrations can be postmarked
- Voter registrations can be completed at a DMV office, at the close of business
- Voter registrations can be completed in person at a state agency or other department offering public assistance
- Deputy registrars can register voters
- A voter registration form can be delivered to the election office by someone other than the person registering to vote.

After April 30, the only other method for registering to vote is in person at the county election office. The absolute final day to register prior to the primary election is 6:00 p.m. local time on May 4.

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