



STATE OF NEBRASKA

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SECRETARY OF STATE

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PRIMARY ELECTION RECAP

by Bob Evnen
Nebraska Secretary of State

On June 8, the State Canvass Board certified the results of Nebraska's record-breaking May 12 primary election. This was a remarkable achievement since the primary took place in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. The total number of ballots cast by Nebraska voters was more than 492,000, breaking the previous record of 413,000 ballots cast set in 1972.

Nebraska held its primary on the statutorily established date in an orderly and safe manner. Unlike some other states, our primary was neither postponed nor chaotic.

No change in Nebraska's election law was necessary to accomplish this. Our law already provides for early "no excuse" balloting. In cooperation with the counties, we notified every Nebraska voter of their already existing right to request an early ballot. Every voter was sent an early ballot application that they could fill out and return to their county clerk or election commissioner. We also advertised on radio and in newspapers across the state, and we used social media to spread the word that voters who did not wish to vote at the polls for this election could do so early by mail.

Obviously, voters got the word and many made the decision to vote at home this time rather than at the polls. Usually, about 25 percent of Nebraska voters vote early by mail. In the 2020 primary, a little over 75 percent did so. I heard from a number of voters who told me that they prefer to vote at the polls, but that they would vote from home for this election.

At this point, I don't think that it will be necessary to repeat these notifications for the November general election. Every single Nebraska voter now knows of both their early ballot option and their option to vote at the polls. Hopefully the pandemic will be tamped down by then, but whatever the situation, we have proven that our state can keep Nebraska voters and poll workers safe, we will be ready to do so again in November.

While we had many voters cast their ballots early, about 76,000 Nebraska voters chose to cast their ballot at the polls on May 12. Our voters and our poll workers were kept safe by the planning, dedication and hard work of many of their fellow Nebraskans. New poll workers stepped up to help when many of our long-time poll workers who are in the at-risk age category decided to sit this one out.

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We recruited new poll workers with the support of the Nebraska State Bar Association, the Nebraska Board of Public Accountancy, the Nebraska Society of Certified Public Accountants, the Nebraska REALTORS Association and the Nebraska National Guard. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and the Nebraska Family Alliance provided us with production support for radio advertisements, and the Nebraska Broadcasters Association provided us with advertising access to stations all across the state.

The supply chain for the provisioning of personal protective equipment all across the state was the result of the incredible dedication of the Nebraska Department of Administrative Services, the Nebraska Department of Roads, the Nebraska National Guard and our vendors.

Finally, I feel a very great debt of gratitude, as should all of the citizens of our state, to our county clerks and county election commissioners, and their staffs, and to the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's office, led by Deputy Secretary of State Wayne Bena.

I always stand as a proud Nebraskan, and I have never been more proud than I am at this moment, when Nebraskans stood against the coronavirus and exercised their right to vote in record numbers.

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