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Three political parties lose recognition in Nebraska

LINCOLN – The Nebraska, Green and Libertarian political parties have lost their official status as recognized parties in Nebraska, according to Secretary of State John Gale.

The three parties lost their legal status after none of their candidates for president or U.S. Senate in the November 2008 election received 5 percent of the vote as required by state law.

Voters affiliated with one of the three parties will remain as registered voters. They will be sent notices that their registration status, however, has been changed to nonpartisan.

They can affiliate with a recognized party by filling out a new voter registration form.

In Nebraska, a nonpartisan voter in a primary election is entitled to request a congressional ballot (House and Senate) from a recognized party of his or her choosing.

Converting registrants of the three parties to a nonpartisan status assures them of the right to receive a congressional ballot in the next statewide primary election, set for May 2010. Without that conversion, they would not have been entitled to a congressional ballot.

A third party can gain statewide ballot status by mounting a successful petition drive, which would require obtaining about 6,000 signatures of registered voters.

"It's not unusual for third parties in Nebraska to lose their legal status," Gale said. "It's difficult for third parties to remain on the ballot for a long period of time."

About 10,000 voters were registered with the three parties for last fall's election: Nebraska Party, 8,585; Green Party, 1,053; and Libertarian Party, 472.

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