



From the Office of Secretary of State

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Governor signs bill changing in-person early voting in Nebraska

LINCOLN – Governor Dave Heineman has signed legislation that will reduce the period of in-person early voting in Nebraska from 35 days to 30 days, a bill that will help assure that Nebraska complies with the Help America Vote Act.

State lawmakers passed an amended version of LB271, which reduced the voting period to 30 days. The bill does not impact the start date for absentee ballot requests.

“The bill as introduced would have reduced that time frame to 25 days,” explained Secretary of State John Gale. “That would have given us greater assurance of having ballots properly certified and the AutoMARKs properly coded for use by visually impaired and disabled voters on the first day of early in-person voting.”

The issue of reducing the early voting window arose from a hearing conducted by the Secretary of State’s office. A visually impaired woman from Lincoln filed a complaint because she was unable to vote on an AutoMARK at the start of the in-person early voting period on October 1. The hearing officer who heard the complaint recommended that the appropriate remediation would be to reduce in-person voting from 35 days to 25 days. The average for most states for early in-person voting is 22 days.

“We will work hard to accomplish what needs to be done before any of our statewide elections to prevent future HAVA complaints,” said Gale.

LB271 was sponsored by Senator Scott Lautenbaugh for the Secretary of State.

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