



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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Nebraska getting federal funds for elections as part of omnibus bill

LINCOLN – Nebraska will receive some timely federal funding for elections, courtesy of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 signed by President Trump. Secretary of State John Gale says the timing and process for distributing payments still needs to be finalized. But, it must happen quickly. According to the legislation, funds must be disbursed by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) within 45 days.

“This money comes at a time when Nebraska and other states are taking steps to boost cybersecurity protections as well as replace outdated equipment and voter registration systems,” said Gale. “I am pleased to see that Congress included the \$380 million dollars in this significant federal funding package.”

Of the \$380 million, it is estimated that Nebraska will receive around \$2.3 million, although, the EAC will ultimately be responsible for determining the final calculation for each state.

Gale said the EAC is expected to reach out to recipient states and territories to facilitate distribution of funds as quickly as possible. Nebraska ran out of federal funds for elections in 2015. The state assumed all funding starting in 2016.

“The first distribution of federal funding resulted from passage of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA),” explained Gale. “That law authorized \$3.65 billion dollars in funding to states to improve areas of election administration that were found to be lacking as a result of the 2000 presidential election.”

At that time, Nebraska received nearly \$21.5 million, which included a five percent mandatory match provided by the state. As it did then, Nebraska will be required to provide a five percent match to whatever federal funding it receives through the

current omnibus spending bill, however, the state will have two years to come up with that amount.

“When HAVA was first implemented, states were also required to appoint a citizen advisory committee to develop a plan for distributing funds. However, it appears that in order to expedite the funds this time, states will not be required to take that additional step.”

Gale said he was very appreciative to the state’s congressional delegation for supporting the appropriation of remaining HAVA dollars. “My office will begin to develop a plan for the use of funds in the most appropriate and reasonable fashion for cybersecurity and election technology, as most critical.”

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