



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

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Gale outlines election security ahead of May primary

LINCOLN – Secretary of State John Gale is assuring voters that election security remains his highest priority, as the first round of ballots are prepared to be sent for the May 15 primary election. Ballots must be sent to overseas and military voters by March 30. In Nebraska, early voting by mail will begin on April 9.

Addressing the issue of cybersecurity, Gale said his office has continued to build on defenses implemented prior to and during the 2016 presidential election.

“This issue remains a top focus of my administration. Fortunately, in the period since the last election, more resources have been made available to all states to help assess potential threats.”

Gale said his office has had ongoing contact with regional representatives from the Department of Homeland Security. “They have offered services designed to detect any hacking attempts made to our election management system as well as to the system that we utilize to publish race results on Election Day.”

As it did in 2016, the state will partner with multiple vendors to conduct the upcoming election. Primary among them is Election Systems and Software (ES&S), the election system provider for Nebraska and multiple other states.

“ES&S continues to conduct scans of its own systems, as do the other vendors that we enlist. Protections are in place to ensure that tampering is easily detected and that if something were to occur, backup data is accessible.”

Gale also emphasized that race results are transmitted through a secure website and that all official results are based on the tabulation of paper ballots.

“Nebraska has always relied on paper ballots for official results. So, if someone were to hack into or corrupt results posted on the Secretary of State’s website on Election Day, it would not change the actual outcome of the election.”

In addition to protective steps implemented by vendors and programs offered through the Department of Homeland Security, Gale also stressed the cooperative efforts of the 93 county election officials across the state.

“They have also had to increase their awareness of cybersecurity threats and make sure they follow best practices to reduce their vulnerability to hacking attempts.”

Gale said cybersecurity threats, while not new, were certainly elevated as a result of the 2016 election.

“My office has been taking steps to ensure the security of our statewide election system for more than a decade and it will remain a top focus heading into the future. Nebraska citizens should feel confident that their ballot will be secure and will be counted on Election Day.”

Additional information is available on the Secretary of State’s website concerning processes the state follows to protect the integrity of the election. It can be found under the “Elections” tab here: <http://www.sos.ne.gov/elec/nebraska-election-security-info.html>.

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