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**NEW YEAR BRINGS ELECTION CHANGES;
JANUARY 8 IS LAST DAY TO REGISTER;
CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE DEADLINES ALTERED**

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Jan. 2, 2008 – The State Board of Elections today listed a number of changes that affect Illinois voters, candidates and election authorities as they prepare for the 2008 Presidential election.

“Illinois voters who have not voted since the last Presidential election will face several changes for the 2008 election,” said Daniel W. White, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

“Illinois, like many other states has transitioned to more modern voting systems, plus the election calendar is different because the Illinois primary election has been moved up six weeks.”

Changes that most directly affect voters:

- Feb. 5, Primary Election Day, earliest in Illinois history.
- Jan. 8, major deadline for registering to vote.
- Jan. 14-31, early voting time period - first Presidential election in Illinois to utilize early voting centers.

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- Jan. 9-22, grace period registration - first Presidential election to utilize grace period for eligible voters.
- Also, a new law now allows first-time voters to cast an absentee ballot by mail if they provide sufficient identification to their election authority.

The change in the primary election date has changed campaign disclosure deadlines:

- The Pre-election report for the primary election has been eliminated.
- The Semi-annual filing period has been shortened. Reports now must be filed by the 20th of January and July.
- Schedule A-1 (Report of Campaign Contributions of More than \$500) must be on file within two business days of the receipt of any contribution over \$500 received from Jan. 1 through Feb. 4.

Also, 2008 marks the first Presidential election in which all Illinois voters will use touch-screen and optical scan equipment. Punch-card voting systems, commonly used prior to 2006, have been eliminated. Most election authorities purchased new voting equipment to comply with the federal Help America Vote Act.

The State Board of Elections is an independent state agency charged with the responsibility of having general supervision over the administration of election laws of the state.

More details regarding the upcoming election are available at www.elections.il.gov
