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STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE PROJECT

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Oct. 4, 2006 – All 110 election authorities in Illinois are now able to communicate with a new statewide voter registration database being constructed by the Illinois State Board of Elections in conjunction with the election authorities in each county.

The statewide voter database is a requirement of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), and the timely transfer of data to and from local jurisdictions to the centralized database is an essential component of HAVA compliance.

For the Illinois primary election in March, there were 7,263,969 registered voters. The regular deadline for registering to vote in the Nov. 7 general election is Oct. 10.

Once fully operational, the Illinois Voter Registration System, as it is formally called, will be able to nightly upload voter registration data from the local jurisdictions to the statewide, centralized, voter registration database.

“Illinois is making great progress towards completion of the centralized statewide voter registration system,” said Dan White, executive director of the State Board of Elections. “While not finished yet, the present state centralized system allows jurisdictions to: check for duplicate registrations and voter registration transfers; identify registrations with incorrect or missing information; and locate a voter anywhere in the state. The result is a much cleaner and more efficient voter registration database.”

For example, matches are made of voters who have potentially registered in multiple jurisdictions. Also, a check can be made to identify voters who have changed their names, such as when a woman changes her name following marriage.

Congress approved HAVA after the disputed 2000 election in Florida, and one of the reforms establishes standards which require states to develop a statewide voter registration system. When the Illinois project started, not all of the counties were computerized and the election authorities with electronic records were using approximately 21 different platforms. In addition, a state law requires each jurisdiction to maintain their own local system, so the new centralized registration system was designed with the existing registration systems in place.

The last of the counties have now been computerized, and the election authorities are using approximately 16 different platforms.

For most election authorities, the change to a centralized system from a tape submission process has required an upgrade of their voter registration system. HAVA grants, administered by the State Board of Elections, are used to reimburse election authorities for their cost of upgrading.

Elections are administered locally by 110 election authorities. These are the county clerks in 101 counties, one county election commission and eight municipal election commissions.

In addition, the Secretary of State and state Department of Corrections are directly involved in the project. The Secretary of State's "motor voter" record-keeping system is being integrated into the centralized system and Corrections' records will be utilized to remove the names of incarcerated felons from the voter registration database. The entire project will be finalized in 2008.

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

For more information on the election, contact election authorities in each county or visit the Board's website www.elections.il.gov.

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