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VOTER REGISTRATION EXTENDED

SPRINGFIELD, IL, OCTOBER 10, 2006 - A new state law creates a “grace period” for people to register to vote later than normal, but people who take advantage of the late registration opportunity are limited in the way they can vote.

After the normal registration period closes – 28 days prior to the election – individuals may register in-person at the office of their election authority. The “grace period” for registering to vote is the 27th to the 14th day prior to the election.

For the Nov. 7 general election, the “grace period” for voter registration is Oct. 11-24. Furthermore, people who register to vote during this two-week grace period must vote in the office of the election authority or vote absentee by mail. There are 110 election authorities in Illinois, most of them county clerks, and the others boards established by larger cities.

A survey of election authorities by the State Board of Elections shows that 2,367 people voted after registering to vote during the “grace period” for the March primary election, the first such time for “grace period” registration.

The people who register during the “grace period” do not go to their polling place on Election Day, nor are they allowed to vote under the new Illinois law that establishes early voting centers.

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Under the new early voting law, Illinois voters can cast a ballot prior to Election Day without having to provide a reason or an excuse for wanting to vote early. Election authorities across the state will identify locations and announce where registered voters can vote early. For the general election, early voting begins Oct. 16 and ends Nov. 2. Persons voting early must show valid photo identification to an election official, a stricter identification requirement than for persons casting a ballot at their polling place on Election Day.

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 “grace period” registration or early voting, contact the election authority in your county or visit www.elections.il.gov.

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