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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRACE PERIOD REGISTRATION BEGINS

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Jan. 6, 2010 – Although the traditional deadline for registering to vote in the primary election has passed, a Grace Period that allows Illinois residents to register or change their voting address begins today, Jan. 6.

Grace Period Registration runs until Jan. 26, a week later than in previous elections because of a new state law extending the time period. Grace Period Registration is conducted at the office of each of the state's 110 election authorities.

However, the law requires that a person participating in Grace Period Registration who wants to cast a ballot in the upcoming election to vote at the same office or by mail at the discretion of the election authority. Those people are not allowed to vote at an Early Voting Center or at a polling place on Election Day.

Election Day is Feb. 2.

The requirements to register to vote are: be a citizen of the United States; be at least 18 years old by Election Day; have been a resident of the precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

When registering to vote in person, two forms of identification are required – one must show the current address of the applicant.

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A new law, Public Act 96-0317, adds identification that is acceptable for voter registration. A lease or contract for a residence is now an acceptable form of proof of a voter's residence. Also, a photo identification card issued by a university or college and mail addressed to the voter at the address of residence is acceptable proof.

Illinois residents now may check their registration online by going to www.elections.il.gov and clicking the "Voting and Elections" tab at the top of the page and from the next page clicking "Am I Registered" at the top left of the page. The new service is made available through the Illinois Voter Registration Service database, a requirement of 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.

Elections are administered locally by the State's 110 election authorities.

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