



STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

JESSE SMART
Chairman

WANDA REDNOUR
Vice Chairman

DANIEL W. WHITE
Executive Director

ELECTION NEWS

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100 W. Randolph Street
Suite 14-100
Chicago, Illinois 60601
312/814-6440
312/814-6431 (TTY)

1020 S. Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704
217/782-4141
217/782-1518 (TTY)
www.elections.il.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: DANIEL W. WHITE
(312) 814-6440

VOTER REGISTRATION PERIOD EXTENDED

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, February 22, 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 March 21 primary election, the “grace period” for voter registration is Feb. 22 to March 7.

In addition, people who register to vote during this two-week 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 are boards established by larger cities.

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

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 March 21 primary election, early voting will begin Feb. 27 and end March 16.

The Illinois 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. The Board works closely with election authorities in all regions 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. # # #