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

2329 S. MacArthur Blvd.
Springfield, Illinois 62704
217-782-4141
(TTY) 217-782-1518
www.elections.il.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: JIM TENUTO
312-814-6440

NO EXCUSE NEEDED TO VOTE ABSENTEE

Springfield, Illinois – February 28, 2012 - Voters in the March 20, 2012 General Primary Election may request and vote an absentee ballot by mail without having to specify a reason. Previously, state law required that eligible voters meet at least one standard, such as being absent from the county Election Day or being incapacitated, before they were entitled to receive an absentee ballot. Eligible voters were able to apply for an absentee ballot beginning February 9th by contacting their election authority.

“No-excuse absentee voting gives voters yet another option in voting” said Rupert Borgsmiller, Executive Director of the State Board of Elections. “In-person early voting has also proven to be a popular option.” Approximately 380,000 people, about 1 in every 10 voters, who cast a ballot in the November, 2010, General Election, went to Early Voting Centers.

The traditional deadline for registering to vote was February 21, 2012. The registration requirements to eligible 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, two forms of identification are required- one must show the current address of the applicant. State law has expanded identification that is acceptable for registration. A lease or contract

for a residence is now an acceptable form of proof of a voter's residence. A photo identification card issued by a university or college and mail addressed to the voter at the address of residence is also acceptable proof.

Illinois residents may check their registration online by going to www.elections.il.gov and clicking the "Voters" tab and then clicking "Am I Registered to Vote in Illinois" in the center of the page under "Voter Information". There are two statewide established political parties in Illinois – Republican and Democratic.

In a Primary Election, an Illinois voter can vote for candidates of one party only. An exception would be for a voter to request a nonpartisan ballot for a public question, voting for the initiative alone.

In addition to voting for a Presidential nominee and delegates to the national nominating convention, voters in the March 20, 2012, General Primary Election will nominate candidates for Representative in Congress, State Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly, certain Counties Officers and Judges. Also, some political party officials will be elected.

In some cases, nonpartisan referenda may be voted upon at a primary. If a voter does not want to declare a party affiliation, he or she may request a nonpartisan ballot only.

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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