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Deadline Extended for Voter Registration

SPRINGFIELD, IL, Oct. 8, 2008 – The deadline to register to vote in the Nov. 4 Presidential election has been extended to Oct. 21.

Under the terms of a state law effective for the first time in a November Presidential election, eligible voters are granted a “grace period” for registering to vote. However, the law restricts where people may register during the grace period and how they cast a ballot.

Eligible voters may register during the grace period at the office of their election authority or at a location specifically designated by the election authority. Elections are administered locally by the State’s 110 election authorities – 101 county clerks, one county election commission and eight municipal election commissions.

To be eligible to register to vote, a person must:

- Be a citizen of the United States;
- Be at least 18 years of age by Election Day;
- Have been a resident of the precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

- more -

During the 2008 primary election, 7,803 people registered to vote in Illinois during the grace period.

People who register during the grace period must vote in the office of the election authority or vote absentee by mail. People who register during the grace period do not go to their polling place on Election Day, nor are they allowed to vote at early voting centers.

Early voting, first used in Illinois in the 2006 elections, allows registered voters to cast a ballot at early voting centers between Oct. 13 or 14 (depending on your location) and Oct. 30 without having to provide a reason or an excuse.

The law requires voters casting a ballot at an early voting center to display valid identification such as a current driver's license, a state-issued ID card or another government issued-ID with a photograph. The requirement of photo identification for an early voter is stricter than other identification requirements for people casting a ballot at their polling place on Election Day.

State law prohibits a person who voted at an early voting center from voting again on Election Day. The votes cast at early voting centers are not counted until Election Day.

Also, absentee voting laws remain in place. Persons who desire an absentee ballot should contact their local election authority for an application or for more information.

The State Board of Elections is an independent 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, early voting or other election laws and procedures, contact your election authority or visit the Board's website: www.elections.il.gov

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