

Secretary of State Matt Dunlap promotes September 2010

National Voter Registration Month

Governor Baldacci issues proclamation

Augusta – Secretary of State Matt Dunlap today joined fellow members of the National Association of Secretaries of State and Governor Baldacci in proclaiming September 2010 National Voter Registration Month. Secretary Dunlap is working with Maine's local election administrators to make the State's eligible voters aware of registration deadlines and requirements for this year's general election, as well as promoting State resources to help with the registration process.

"Now is the time to get registered to vote" said Dunlap who is currently serving as President of NASS. "It's a quick, simple process and will ensure that you are on the voter rolls in your town should you wish to cast an absentee ballot this November."

In Maine you can register to vote in person for the November 2 General and Referendum Election at your town office or city hall up to and including, Election Day. Applications that are mailed to the town or city hall or delivered by a third person as part of a voter registration drive must be received in your municipal office by Tuesday, October 12, 2010. To learn more about Maine's elections, including the online absentee ballot request service, visit: www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/index.html.

NASS members established National Voter Registration Month to encourage voter participation and to increase awareness of state voter registration requirements and deadlines. More than half of all states have a deadline that falls on October 4 or 5, about a month before the November 2 general election. According to U.S. Census figures, sixty million eligible voters did not register to vote in 2008. Of the non-voters that year, fourteen percent said they did not vote because they missed their state's voter registration deadline.

"In Maine we're fortunate to lead the nation in the percentage of eligible citizens who are registered to vote in our elections," said Dunlap. "This is in no small part due to the seriousness with which Mainer's take their civic responsibilities as well as our long history of removing barriers to the registration process by implementing policies such as Election Day registration. Nevertheless, there remain Maine citizens who are eligible but are not registered and it is our goal that every eligible citizen registers and participates in our elections."

Nine places (District of Columbia, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Wyoming) now offer Election Day registration, while North Carolina offers same-day registration during the state's early voting period. Eight states (Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Oregon, Utah and Washington) allow voter registration and registration updates via the Internet.

New for this year, NASS and Tangent Media LLC have released a Can I Vote widget that allows Internet users in Maine and throughout the U.S. to directly access official,

nonpartisan registration and voting information that is specific to where they live in a simple, portable format. It functions much like the association's Can I Vote website, www.canivote.org, which helps connect users to state and local election websites with voting forms, online tools, election official contact information, and more.

The text of the National Voter Registration Month proclamation follows:

National Association of Secretaries of State

VOTER REGISTRATION MONTH PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, while Maine leads the nation with the highest percentage of eligible citizens registered to vote with nearly one million Maine residents currently registered, there remain citizens who are otherwise qualified to vote in Federal, State and local elections who have yet to register; and

WHEREAS, each qualified citizen has not only the right to vote, but also a civic obligation and responsibility to do so; and

WHEREAS, the failure of our qualified citizens to register and vote weakens our system of free democratic institutions and processes, compelling Maine leaders to address this shortcoming; and

WHEREAS, the voter registration process in Maine is easier and more convenient than ever before, with voter registration resources and materials available online and at your municipal office or nearest motor vehicle branch office, and other options such as election day voter registration available to eligible citizens; and

WHEREAS, the need for public information and education regarding voter registration and related deadlines is extremely critical as Maine voters prepare to take part in the November elections; and

WHEREAS, the nationwide voter registration campaign endorsed by the National Association of Secretaries of State could substantially reduce the number of qualified citizens who will be barred from voting in the forthcoming general elections by reasons of failure to comply with election registration laws; and

NOW, THEREFORE I, JOHN E. BALDACCI, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby proclaim September, 2010 as **National Voter Registration Month** throughout the State of Maine, and urge all citizens to recognize this observance.

In testimony, whereof, I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed
GIVEN under my hand at Augusta this thirty-first day of August Two Thousand and Ten.

John E. Baldacci

Governor