

###

Nebraskans for Civic Reform releases the 2016 Primary Election Observation Report

Contact: Bri McLarty at (210) 912-4826
bri.mclarty@nereform.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Nebraskans for Civic Reform's Voting Rights Program runs the only non-partisan Election Observation Program in Nebraska. Nebraskans for Civic Reform recruited, trained, and dispatched over 30 nonpartisan election observers to various polling places in four Nebraska counties, Colfax, Douglas, Lancaster, and Saline, for the May 10th primary election.

"The goal of our election observation program is to ensure that elections are being conducted fairly and consistently across the state," states Bri McLarty, director of voting rights with Nebraskans for Civic Reform. "They are instructed to report any irregularities or instances of disenfranchisement immediately to our headquarters and we reach out directly to the election commissioner to solve the problem".

Today, NCR is releasing our comprehensive report of the observation program during the May 10th primary. The report includes specific incidents reported to NCR and data collected by the observers including wait times, number of polling booths, layout of the polling place, and placement of the Automark machine, a touchscreen voting machine that allows individuals with a disability or limited physical capabilities to vote privately and independently.

"In meetings with county election officials, it is clear they are dedicated to serving the citizens of Nebraska, and this report is another tool for them to identify areas of success, and areas of improvement" stated McLarty. The report includes recommendations from NCR and successful practices observed in other counties.

In the report, NCR identifies several issues of concern, including, but not limited to the partially-closed primary system in Nebraska, reports of registered independents being turned away or receiving the wrong ballot, and significant confusion among voters and poll workers on how to request and distribute the various ballots.

"Our non-partisan observation program first protects the individual's right to vote, but we also look at and address systemic problems and barriers," states McLarty, "it is clear that Nebraska's partially-closed primary system is such a barrier. I don't know if the answer is a legislative overhaul of our primary system, but it is something that needs to be discussed". NCR's report recommends, at the very least,

uniformity of materials provided to counties by the Secretary of State that are easy to understand and placed in proximity to voter check-in.

Please contact Bri McLarty, Director of Voting Rights, Nebraskans for Civic Reform, via email at bri.mclarty@nereform.org or please call her cell at (210) 912-4826

###

Nebraskans for Civic Reform is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing K-12 civic engagement and community engagement, veterans job readiness, and protecting voting rights for all Nebraskans. NCR works to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans. More information on NCR's programs is available at www.nereform.org