STATE CAPITOL
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

PAUL D. PATE SECRETARY OF STATE



OFFICE OF THE IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE

January 6, 2017

National Association of Secretaries of State 444 North Capitol St. NW, Suite 401 Washington, DC 20001

Dear NASS Awards Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my "Helping Veterans and Iowans with Disabilities Vote" project for the NASS IDEAS award. This effort was one we immediately undertook when I returned to the Iowa Secretary of State's Office in January 2015. Voter participation is one of my top goals as Iowa's Commissioner of Elections, so helping people who might have difficult voting understand and partake in the process is a vital component of that goal.

My entire Elections Division and Communications Team has been fully vested in this project since its launch and I'm proud of the effort they put in. The experience has been educational, eye-opening, and very rewarding for all of us.

I am sure you will agree with me that helping citizens with disabilities vote is vital for our representative form of government. Their voices are often not heard in the legislative process. I want to change that by helping all of them #BeAVoter.

This project is one that can be implemented in every state. "Helping Veterans and Iowans with Disabilities Vote" was paid for in part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Election Assistance to Individuals with Disabilities grant. However, even if no federal funding is available and your own budget might prevent some of these issues from being implemented, there are certainly portions of our program that can be utilized in other states. I hope all our NASS colleagues will find this information useful.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul D. Pate

Iowa Secretary of State

NASS IDEAS Award Application - 2017 State of Iowa



State Office: Iowa Secretary of State Paul D. Pate

Contact: Michael Ross, Deputy Secretary of State; (515)725-2874, michael.ross@sos.iowa.gov

Title of Program: Helping Veterans and Iowans with Disabilities Vote

Project lead: Michael Ross, Deputy Secretary of State, and Kevin Hall, Communications Director

Description of the program: Secretary Pate launched an unprecedented effort to help military veterans and lowans with disabilities vote. Utilizing videos and social media, revamping the Secretary of State's website, hiring an outreach coordinator, conducting training sessions and workshops, implementing new administrative rules, and numerous other avenues, the Secretary of State's Office reached out to lowans all over the state. The goal was to make sure lowans with disabilities, and those that serve them, are aware of the resources available to help them participate in elections.

Subject area of nomination: Elections

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HISTORY

One of the top priorities for Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate is for every eligible Iowan to participate in the state's elections. That effort requires education and encouragement, showing voters with disabilities that the process is simple and can be done without ever leaving their home. An estimated 300,000 Iowans of voting age have some type of disability and studies show that people with disabilities are among the least likely to vote. Secretary Pate made it a goal to help that community participate in Iowa's election process.

January 2015: The Effort Launches

Upon returning to the Secretary of State's Office in January 2015, Secretary Pate implemented many new processes to enhance and promote ballot accessibility for Iowans with disabilities, including:

- Conducting extensive training with every state agency regarding registering voters.
- Implementing administrative rules requiring mandated reporting of voter registration by each state agency.
- Reviewing accessibility aids for non-sighted voters, including an assessment of braille materials for use at the polling place and ensuring they're available at all 1,681 precincts.
- Updating the voter registration form to format it as a fillable form and make voter registration materials screen reader-friendly.
- Training sight-impaired lowans on using accessible voting equipment, in partnership with the Iowa Council of the United Blind
- Extensive training sessions for lowans with disabilities in partnership lowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Many Iowans with disabilities are also military veterans. Secretary Pate's campaign took a three-pronged approach:

- 1. Target the general population of lowans with disabilities.
- 2. Target those who bravely served our country in the military.
- 3. Help the 99 county auditors and 10,000 precinct election officials in the state that administer elections remove any potential barriers to the ballot box.

When Secretary Pate's Office <u>launched online voter registration</u> in January 2016, we worked with the lowa Department of Transportation to ensure the system complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for webpage function and design. To assure the continued best access for persons with disabilities, an ADA compliance consultant was contracted to review the online registration system and recommend appropriate adjustments as needed.

Making sure Iowa's elections are accessible for voters with disabilities means educating county auditors and precinct election officials about the need for accessibility. These requirements include ensuring the buildings are accessible for people with disabilities, providing accessible voting equipment and ensuring poll workers are knowledgeable about their services they need to provide to voters who might need help casting their ballot.

Steps taken to target all lowans with disabilities include:

- Producing nine videos about accessible voting equipment and polling locations, and
 distributing these to all 99 county auditors, as well as agencies that assist lowans with
 disabilities. Four of the videos demonstrate how to set up and operate accessible voting
 equipment. These were designed for county auditors and precinct election officials. Four
 more of the videos are designed for voters who need to use the equipment. The final
 one, "Election Day in lowa", is a general instructional video about what to expect on
 Election Day for both voters and poll workers.
- Producing a 30-second Public Service Announcement that ran on TV and statewide radio encouraging Iowans with disabilities to vote and providing pertinent information.
- Releasing a bipartisan video of state officials detailing the resources available to Iowans with disabilities to help them vote.
- Revamping the Secretary of State's website, sos.iowa.gov/disabilities, to provide a one-stop shop to help lowans with disabilities vote. On this page, lowans can register to vote online, download an absentee ballot request form, and learn about curbside voting and other assistance you can receive at your polling site. The webpage also includes several videos that detail how to register to vote, what to expect at your polling site, and how to use voting machines specially designed for people with disabilities.
- Creating and distributing 10,000 brochures statewide, which detail the many resources
 available for Iowans with disabilities to help them vote. The brochures include
 information like voting with assistance, curbside voting, and answering frequently asked
 questions. The brochures were provided to government agencies, entities that work
 with Iowans who have disabilities, and are available in digital form as well on the Iowa
 Secretary of State's website.
- Hiring a voter outreach coordinator to travel the state, visiting with organizations that
 work with lowans with disabilities, to help promote the voting resources available to
 them.
- Partnering with the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council to conduct workshops in 21 counties to help Iowans with disabilities vote.

Steps taken to specifically target lowa's military veterans include:

 Creating and distributing 10,000 brochures statewide, <u>aimed specifically at military</u> veterans, which detail the many resources available for lowans with disabilities to help them vote. The brochures include information like voting with assistance, curbside voting, and answering frequently asked questions. The brochures were provided to government agencies, entities that work with lowans who have disabilities, and are available in digital form as well on the lowa Secretary of State's website.

- Visiting with veterans-affiliated groups like American Legions, VFW's, Veterans Affairs departments, resource fairs, and many more to spread the word about resources available to help veterans, especially those with disabilities, vote.
- Creating a "We've Got Your Back" Facebook Ad and Google Ad campaign aimed specifically at Iowa military veterans to encourage voting and educate them about resources available to help them vote.
- Producing a bipartisan video with Iowa officials that served in the military, aimed specifically at informing veterans about the resources available to them for voting.
- Attending multiple <u>Joining Community Forces</u> meetings to inform the military community about resources available to help veterans vote.
- Coordinating with the Iowa National Guard to have soldiers deployed in Afghanistan send videos encouraging veterans and all Iowans to vote.

Steps taken to specifically target county auditors and poll workers include:

- Purchasing Acer Tablets for all 99 county auditors, equipped with the ADA Checklist
 Program assist to every lowa county with their ADA review and ensure that all 1,681
 lowa precincts are accessible.
- As mentioned earlier, <u>producing nine videos about accessible voting equipment</u> and polling locations, and distributing these to all 99 county auditors, as well as agencies that assist lowans with disabilities. Four of the videos demonstrate how to set up and operate accessible voting equipment. These were designed for county auditors and precinct election officials. Four more of the videos are designed for voters who need to use the equipment. The final one, "<u>Election Day in Iowa</u>", is a general instructional video about what to expect on Election Day for both voters and poll workers.
- Our voter outreach coordinator visited county auditors' offices in each of the 45 counties she visited to deliver brochures, discuss procedures for aiding lowa voters with disabilities, and provide other pertinent information.
- Assisting county auditors with training poll workers on ensuring accessible voting locations and equipment.

<u>SIGNIFICANCE</u>

Fewer lowans with disabilities vote compared to general population

An estimated 300,000 lowans have a disability. That equals almost 10% of the state's population. Unfortunately, for many lowans, their disability makes it more difficult to

participate in elections. This population deserves to have its voice heard and as the state's commissioner of elections, Secretary Pate wanted all 300,000 of these voters know there are resources available to make voting a simple process.

An analysis of the 2012 general election shows that 63.9% of lowans with disabilities voted that year, while 70.2% of lowans without disabilities participated. That is a 6.3% disparity. These statistics show an estimated 191,700 eligible lowans with disabilities did not cast a ballot in 2012. The Secretary of State's Office wanted all of them to participate in 2016.

Disabilities go beyond physical ailments. There are mental disorders and anxieties such as autism, agoraphobia, and PTSD which could deter a person from entering a polling place. These are often undiagnosed. That is why we made a concerted effort to <u>promote curbside voting</u> for people with disabilities.

Tens of thousands of disabled veterans in Iowa

While targeting all lowans with disabilities to help them vote, Secretary Pate also wanted to specifically reach out to military veterans that might also be suffering from a disability. Many of them fought to defend our freedoms and our right to vote, so we should do everything possible to help them cast a ballot.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs informed the Secretary of State's Office that there are 37,221 veterans in Iowa receiving disability compensation. This means that the veteran filed a claim for disability compensation and was found to have one or more service-connected disabilities.

Additionally, more than 18,000 Iowa National Guard soldiers and airmen have served on active duty in support of combat and contingency operations since September 11, 2001. Many of them returned to Iowa with a service-related disability.

Statistics from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs show that 11-20% of those veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars suffer from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). That means, between 1,980-3,600 of those Iowa soldiers could be suffering from a disability that might make entering a polling place extremely difficult. PTSD and similar anxiety-related orders go undiagnosed, so many of these veterans are suffering from a disability, but might not be among those receiving disability compensation.

Secretary Pate wanted to help those who bravely defended our freedoms and our right to vote to be able to cast a ballot themselves and know about all the resources available to them. Military veterans often feel their service and sacrifices are not appreciated. This campaign was one way to show them "we've got your back".

IMPACT/RESULTS

What They're Saying

Steve Crew, chair of Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council: "I would like to acknowledge the Secretary of State's Office support and willingness to partner with our Council to improve voting access to Iowans with disabilities. In addition, I also want to thank them for their commitment to ensure that the spirit of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) is alive and well in the State of Iowa."

Rik Shannon, public policy manager, Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council: "The Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council is pleased to partner with Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate to conduct workshops around the state to assist voters with disabilities to remove any remaining barriers to their full participation in the 2016 election. These workshops provide Iowans with disabilities with an opportunity to ask questions and to learn about the recent changes that make it possible for all voters, regardless of ability, to cast their ballot and have their voice heard."

Lisa Naslund, co-founder and director for Operation Engage America, a group that helps veterans deal with PTSD and traumatic brain injury: "A few weeks ago when I learned from Secretary Pate that someone with these type of disabilities and other mental health issues could feel comfortable to vote from their vehicle and never have to get out of their comfort zone, I was thrilled to be able to share this knowledge with other military members living with these issues."

Mindy Schaefer, president of Iowa State Association of County Auditors and mother of a Iowan with a disability: "I applaud Secretary Pate's efforts to educate the public in voter accessibility and the various ways that they can cast their ballots. It is important that every voter, regardless of disabilities, has the opportunity to vote in a safe, secure and easily accessible way."

30-Year Veteran, First Time Voter

Following participation in one of the workshops conducted by Secretary of State and Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council, attendee Frank Delaney voted for the first time in his life. This is significant because Mr. Delaney is in his 60's and spent 30 years serving in the U.S. Army, defending our freedoms and our right to vote. Frank's story is one small example of the impact this program made on Iowans.

Voting with Disabilities Statistics and Feedback

Although all of the hard data regarding lowans with disabilities voting in the 2016 general election is not fully available yet, we are able to make conclusions from the statistics and information available.

lowa's election turnout for the 2016 general election was 72.8%, placing lowa amongst the <u>top</u> six states in the nation for voter participation.

A post-election survey conducted by Disability Rights Iowa showed significant progress was made in regards to Iowa's accessibility at the polls for voters with disabilities. Less than 10 percent of voters with disabilities gave negative responses regarding accessible space at their polling location. Less than 15 percent responded unfavorably in regards to availability of accessible machines. The Secretary of State's goal is for these numbers to be zero, and the work continues toward that objective.

The National Federation for the Blind conducted a post-Election Day survey showing just under 85 percent of respondents reported they were able to vote privately and independently on an accessible voting machine. This result compared to 51 percent in 2008 and 74 percent in 2014. This shows that nationally we are moving in the right direction and we believe data will show lowa is on pace or above the national level. We will continue to work to bring this number to 100 percent.

Reaching More than One Million Voters with Sponsored Public Service Announcements

The <u>sponsored PSA</u> that ran on two Des Moines television stations in October 2016 reached an audience of 1,074,000 lowans. These were geared specifically to reach older audience segments, which are more likely to consist of people with disabilities.

An audio version of the same PSA ran on statewide radio, reaching more than 242,000 listeners at least once, with 831,000 total impressions.

Reaching Tens of Thousands of Iowans with Disabilities through Social Media Ads

Using Facebook Ads and Google Ads, the Secretary of State's Office targeted Iowans with disabilities and Iowa veterans to provide information on voting resources available to them. One Facebook Ad geared toward veterans with disabilities reached more than 81,000 Iowans, with almost 4,000 link clicks that directed them to sos.iowa.gov/disabilities. Other sponsored Facebook Ads reached in tens of thousands of Iowans, geared specifically to those most likely to have a disability.

Overall, we believe this effort was crucial in helping countless lowans register to vote and participate in the November 2016 campaign, and in making the process easier for them. It is vital to inform them of the resources available, as well as educate county auditors and precinct workers on their responsibilities in helping lowans with disabilities vote.

Secretary Pate's ultimate goal is for every eligible lowan to register to vote and cast a ballot. This continuing effort is a very positive step in that direction, by aiding 300,000 lowans with disabilities in the voting process. Voting is a fundamental right and privilege for every lowan.

Helping voters with disabilities through the process is one of the highest callings for our office and it's an initiative we are extremely proud to conduct.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

NEWS CLIPS

WHO-TV: Iowa Veterans, Voters with Disabilities Targeted by Get Out the Vote Campaign

KIMT-TV: Veterans and voting

KGAN-TV New report shows growing number of eligible voters with disabilities

Clinton Herald: Voting options offered

Quad City Times: Workshop for Iowa voters with disabilities

Newton Daily News: Secretary of State's Office conducts workshop in Jasper County
Tama News-Herald: Aid for veterans and lowans with disabilities to vote launched
Nevada Journal: Secretary of State's Office conducts workshop in Story County
Tri-County Times: Secretary of State's Office conducts workshop in Story County

Marshalltown Times-Republican: Pate launches new voting initiative

Dallas County News: Voting workshop to help veterans and lowans with disabilities in Adel

Estherville Daily News: Resources available for voters with disabilities

Daily lowegian: Pate initiative helps military veterans, lowans with disabilities

Guthrie Center Times: Pate launches new initiative to help veterans & lowans with disabilities
Osceola Sentinel-Tribune: Pate launches new initiative to help veterans, lowans with disabilities

Schaller Herald: New initiative to help military veterans and lowans with disabilities vote

Iowa Public Radio: Improved Access for Voters with Disabilities

Radio lowa: <u>Secretary of State videos focus on helping people with disabilities vote</u> KOEL Radio: lowa's Statewide Initiative to Help Veterans & the Disabled Vote

VIDEO LINKS

They Defended Your Right to Vote: https://youtu.be/78sSdhBIWQA

Special message to lowans with disabilities and their families: https://youtu.be/Lt1KNUUZ6ig

Special message to military veterans and their families: https://youtu.be/bkd4Abu3tqc

Election Day in Iowa: https://youtu.be/AKqBcBQvdZw

Helping Veterans and Iowans with Disabilities Vote: https://youtu.be/ShN5Zm7Cc4o

OVI voter instructions: https://youtu.be/2GNH575QM8M

OVI precinct worker instructions: https://youtu.be/BNU5Yydm0ng

ImageCast voter instructions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jvfl74OuD0

ImageCast precinct worker instructions: https://youtu.be/fVRroo0vQcs

AutoMARK voter instructions: https://youtu.be/sX1GBVUtme4

AutoMARK precinct worker instructions: https://youtu.be/D2ovy-PC7Is

Express Vote voter instructions: https://youtu.be/f9ZpPz_NqlU

Express Vote precinct worker instructions: https://youtu.be/h0Us6xUkjJw

National Guard soldier vote encouragement, Collier: https://youtu.be/dEWtp1ehGww
National Guard soldier vote encouragement, Craig: https://youtu.be/Tm6_i8ynez0
National Guard soldier vote encouragement, Mullins: https://youtu.be/t7yMWfkhOrE

30-Second Public Service Announcement: https://youtu.be/96TQwdf7lxo

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT TV SPOT REACH

General Summary (DMA P18+ D.RTG)

Name	Spots	Cost	Grps	Imp(000)	CPP	Reach	Freq
WHO	43	\$5,725.00	103.7	822.5	\$55.21	48.2	2.2
10W	32	\$2,950.00	31.5	252.3	\$93.65	13.6	2.3
DES MOINES-AMES	75	\$8,675.00	135.2	1074.8	\$64.16	55.2	2.4

Station Summary (DMA P18+ D.RTG)

Station	Spots	Cost	Grps	Imp(000)	CPP	Reach	Freq
WHO	43	\$5,725.00	103.7	822.5	\$55.21	48.2	2.2
WOI	32	\$2,950.00	31.5	252.3	\$93.65	13.6	2.3
Total (DMA P18+)	75	\$8,675.00	135.2	1074.8	\$64.16	55.2	2.4

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT RADIO SPOT REACH

Coverage	Schedule	Total Local Messages	Total Number of Weeks	Reduced Rate Value	Investment \$4,500
Radio Iowa, 65 stations	30 Spots	1,950	Two	\$5,220	\$2.31 average cost per stations
CAMPAIG	IN TOTAL LISTENERS	RP IMPACT: NIELSE	N RESEARCH SP14	10WAN5 18+	
REACH	Number of ur	242,700			
FREQUENCY	Number of ti	3.4			
GROSS IMPRESSIONS	Number of diffe	831,00			

BROCHURES

Two different brochures were produced. One is entitled "Voting in Iowa, Individuals with Disabilities", with the subtext: "What You Need to Know".

Voting in Iowa, Individuals with Disabilities

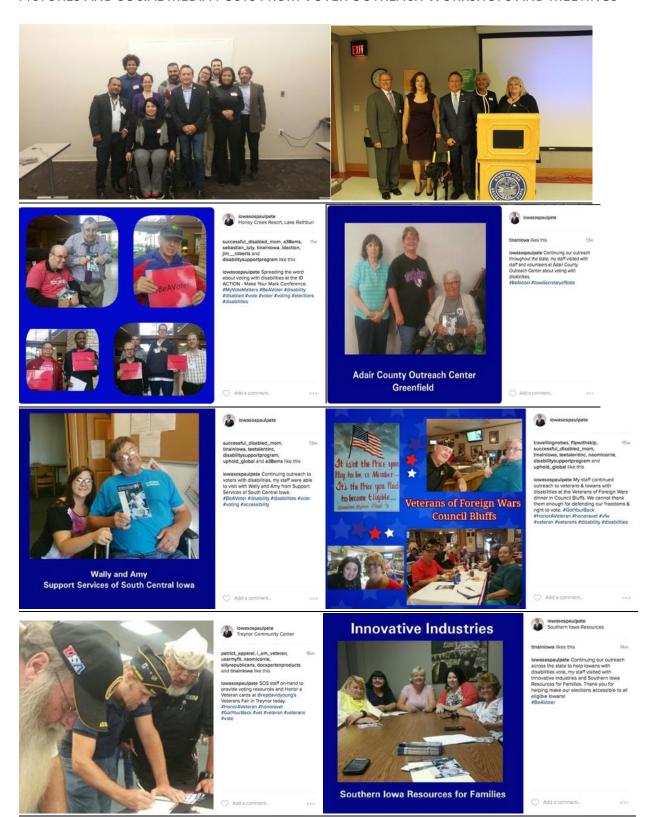


The other brochure produced by the Iowa Secretary of State's Office is entitled "Voting in Iowa, Veterans with Disabilities", with the subtext: "You Had Our Back and Defended Our Right to Vote! Now it's Our Turn. We Have Your Back When It Comes to Voting."

Voting in Iowa, Veterans with Disabilities



PICTURES AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS FROM VOTER OUTREACH WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS



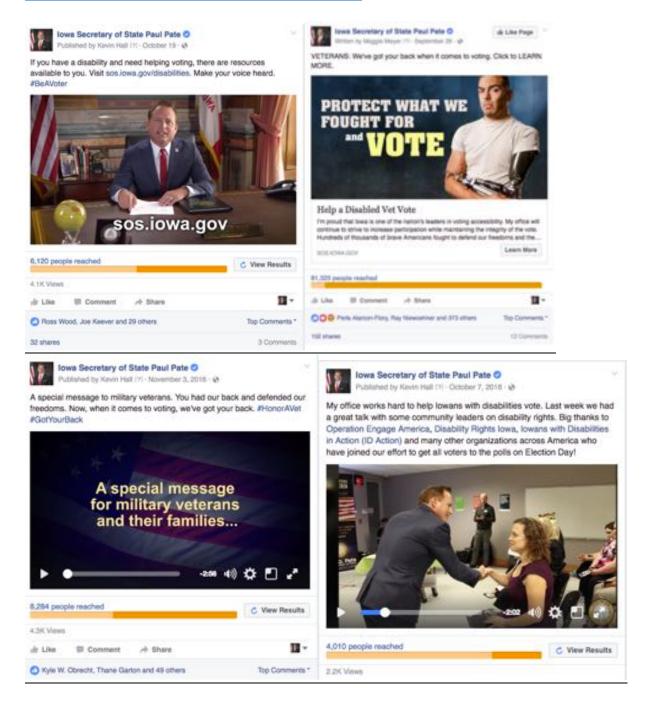
FACEBOOK AD CAMPAIGN

Secretary Pate utilized Facebook and Facebook Ads to target Iowans who are more likely to suffer from a disability, encouraging them to vote and visit the 'Disabilities' page on the Secretary of State's website, https://sos.iowa.gov/disabilities.

If you have a disability and need helping voting...

A special message to military veterans...

Working hard to help lowans with disabilities vote...



OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS











Iowa Sec. of State @lowsSOS - 26 Sep 2018

Very proud of this bipartisan video to help lowans with disabilities #vote. #BeAVoter youtu.be/Lt1KNUUZ6ig





Iowans with Disabilities in Action (ID Action)

October 26, 2016 - vit

A great resource from lows Secretary of State Paul Pate. An instructional video for lowers with disabilities who will need to use the OVI voting machine this upcoming election. All polling places are accessible spaces in lows and every polling place will have an accessible voting machine.

Un gran recurso del Secretario de Estado Paul Pate. Un video instruccional para las personas de lowa con discapacidad que necesitaran ayuda usando la machina OVI para votar durante las elecciones. Todos los lugares de lowa son espacios accesibles y tendrán machinas accesibles para votar.

See Translation





We have partnered with Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate to provide military veterans and Iowans with disabilities with more than 20 workshops from now until Election Day. Our goal is to help remove any barriers in the voting process so everyone's voice is heard regardless of political party.

Nos hemos asociado con el Secretario de Estado de Iowa Paul Pate para proporcionar los veteranos de Iowa y las personas con discapacidad con más de 20 talleres a partir de ahora hasta el día de la elección. Nuestro objetivo es ayudar a eliminar todos los obstáculos en el proceso de votación sin importar el partido político.

See Translation



Iowa Veterans, Voters with Disabilities Targeted by Get Out The Vote Campaign

DES MOINES, lowa-- The latest numbers show nearly 266,000 lowans have...

WHOTY DOM I BY WHO TY CHANNEL 13 NEWS

dr Like

III Comment

of Share

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Iowans with Disabilities in Action (ID Action) shared lowa Secretary of State Paul Pate's photo.

October 24, 2016 - @



Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate

October 24, 2016 · @

We're partnering with Rik Shannon from lowers with Disabilities in Action (ID Action) to conduct workshops across the state to help veterans & lowers with disabilities vote. In Manshalltown, Marshall County Auditor Dearne Raymond & Assistant County Auditor Cindy Reutzel joined us.

30-YEAR ARMY VETERAN VOTING FOR THE FIRST TIME

