

SECRETARY OF STATE



JESSE WHITE
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Jesse White (Democrat) was first elected Secretary of State in 1998, becoming the first African-American to hold the office. He won landslide re-election campaigns in 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014. He became Illinois' longest-serving Secretary of State on May 30, 2014.

Secretary White has brought integrity and innovation to the office. He has successfully fought for stricter road safety laws, reformed the Commercial Driver's License process, created a strong, independent Inspector General's office, upgraded the security features and issuance process of driver's licenses and ID cards and continued to expand services available online.

A strong proponent of traffic safety, White has strengthened laws to combat drunk driving. White streamlined the process requiring first-time DUI offenders to install Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices (BAIID) on their vehicles. As a result of his efforts, drunk driving fatalities have dropped by nearly 50 percent since 1999. His efforts to strengthen the state's driver licensing program for teen drivers are credited for a 51 percent drop in teen traffic deaths. In 2014, White was inducted into the Illinois High School & College Driver Education Hall of Fame.

Under White's leadership, Illinois' Organ/Tissue Donor Registry has climbed to more than 6.3 million potential donors, and the program serves as a national model.

Prior to becoming Secretary of State, White served 16 years in the General Assembly and was Cook County Recorder of Deeds from 1992 to 1998. He founded the internationally known Jesse White Tumbling Team in 1959 and continues coaching the team to keep at-risk youth drug free and in school.

Born in Alton, Illinois, White earned his bachelor's from Alabama State College and served as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and member of the Illinois National Guard and Army Reserve. He played professional baseball with the Chicago Cubs organization, followed by a 33-year career as a teacher and an administrator with Chicago Public Schools. He resides on Chicago's Near North Side. White has two daughters, Glenna and Lorraine, and two grandchildren, Jesse and Susan.

Office of the Secretary of State

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is the largest and most diverse office of its kind in the nation, providing more direct services to citizens than any other public agency. The office issues vehicle license plates and titles; licenses drivers and maintains driver records; registers corporations; enforces the Illinois Securities Act; and administers the state's Organ/Tissue Donor Registry. As State Librarian, the Secretary of State oversees the State Library and literacy programs, and as State Archivist maintains records of legal and historical value housed in the Illinois State Archives.