

I am gravely concerned about the future of the right to vote because many Republicans in the Iowa Legislature believe that the answer to making elections more secure and honest is to make it more difficult for Iowans to participate in our democracy. The end result of HF 590 will be fewer people voting and having their say, in how our state and nation are run, denied. Can you say you represent constituents when you have deprived them of their vote?

I strongly encourage you to vote NO on HF 590

- The bill disenfranchises many Iowans. According to information from www.ncsl.org, 36.6 is the average of days states mail out absentee ballots prior to Election Day NOT 18 days. There are no states that currently require ballots to be received prior to Election Day. If this bill and SF115, which require ballots to be mailed no later than 10 days before the election, are passed, then Iowa voters will have a maximum of 8 days to receive, fill out, and mail back their ballots. This will disenfranchise many “snowbirds”, elderly, armed force members, the disabled, and business people out-of-town on Election Day.
- The bill causes unrealistic time intensive work for county auditors and criminalizes mistakes. They will have to accomplish what they previously did in 29 days in only 18 days. HF 590 also creates additional record keeping tasks for county auditors to perform related to absentee ballots in the name of election security. As a result, county auditors will likely have to hire additional staff to maintain their current high level of performance. But, will they have the funding to do this? In addition, if they make a mistake during this crunch time, even an unintentional one, they can be fined up to \$10,000 for each “technical infraction.”
- The bill fails to specify standards in permitting the state registrar to contract with a third party vendor. There are no standards set or what state databases would be accessed by a third party in order to create a program that allows the state registrar to verify the status of records in the statewide voter registration file and identify ineligible voters on an ongoing basis. This section should be a stand alone bill.
- The bill fails to proactively contact previously ineligible voters to promote voter registration. This bill should add a provision requiring the state register to send to previously ineligible voters whose right to vote has been restored by the Governor’s executive order a letter notifying them of this change and include a voter registration form.
- The bill unnecessarily penalizes voters who chose not to vote and increases costs for county auditors. Requiring county auditors to mail out postcards to registered voters who failed to vote in ONE general election and mark them inactive if they do not return the postcard will require unnecessary expenditures for staff and postage because 20% of registered Iowans only vote in presidential elections.

- The bill restricts voters' freedom to choose who delivers their absentee ballot to the county election office. Voters who vote absentee should have the right to designate a person of their choice to deliver their absentee ballot to the county auditor. This bill forbids anyone who is not a family member, household member, or caretaker from delivering your ballot to the county auditor.
- The bill restricts county auditors from making voting absentee easy and convenient. In 2020, the mailing of ABRs to all registered voters by select county auditors resulted in a large mail in vote. Forbidding auditors from doing so in the future would deprive voters of an ABR from a trusted source, their county auditor..
- The bill creates additional burdens for potential candidates to qualify for the ballot. We need MORE citizens to run for elected office NOT less. Increasing the numbers of signatures required on a petition for a candidate to be on the ballot limits the ballot to only candidates with access to large funds and high name recognition.

These are just a few of the many problems with this legislation. Virtually every provision in this bill creates barriers to voting or the administration of elections more challenging. To maintain the liberties we prize, we must maintain the right to vote for ALL. Please vote NO on HF 590.