

**53.53 Federal write-in ballots.**

1. Upon receipt of an official federal write-in ballot, the commissioner shall examine the voter's written declarations on the envelope. If the voter is eligible to vote under the provisions of [this subchapter](#) and has complied with all requirements for the federal write-in ballot, then the federal write-in ballot is valid unless an Iowa absentee ballot is received from the voter in time to be counted.

2. The voter's declaration or affirmation on the federal write-in ballot constitutes a sufficient registration under the provisions of [chapter 48A](#) and the commissioner shall place the voter's name on the registration record as a registered voter, if the voter's name does not already appear on the registration record. No witness to the oath is necessary.

3. Federal write-in absentee ballots may be used in primary and general elections, and in special elections held pursuant to [section 69.14](#). The federal write-in absentee ballot transmission envelope may also serve as an application for voter registration if the information submitted is sufficient to register the person to vote and the applicant is otherwise eligible to vote under the provisions of [this subchapter](#).

4. The federal write-in ballot shall not be counted if any of the following apply:

a. The ballot was submitted from within the United States, unless the voter is a member of the armed forces of the United States as described in [section 53.37, subsection 2](#), on active duty, and away from the voter's county of residence for purposes of serving on active duty.

b. The voter's completed regular or special Iowa absentee ballot was received by the deadline for return of absentee ballots established in [section 53.44](#).

c. The voter's federal write-in ballot was received after the deadline for return of absentee ballots established in [section 53.44](#).

5. A federal write-in ballot received by the state commissioner of elections shall be forwarded immediately to the appropriate county commissioner. However, if the state commissioner receives a federal write-in ballot after election day and before noon on the Monday following an election, the state commissioner shall at once verify that the voter has complied with the requirements of [this section](#) and that the voter's federal write-in ballot is eligible to be counted. If the ballot is eligible to be counted, the state commissioner shall notify the appropriate county commissioner and make arrangements for the ballot to be transmitted to the county for counting. If the ballot is not eligible to be counted, the state commissioner shall mail the ballot to the appropriate commissioner along with notification that the ballot is ineligible to be counted. The county commissioner shall keep the ballot with the other records of the election.

6. The county commissioner shall notify a voter when the voter's federal write-in ballot was not counted and shall give the voter the reason the ballot was not counted.

[88 Acts, ch 1119, §31; 94 Acts, ch 1169, §56; 94 Acts, ch 1180, §30; 2004 Acts, ch 1083, §36, 37; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §35, 36, 38; 2009 Acts, ch 57, §72; 2014 Acts, ch 1026, §143; 2016 Acts, ch 1003, §2, 3; 2021 Acts, ch 12, §67, 73](#)

Referred to in [§48A.5](#)