



[SF 2343](#) – Elections, Omnibus (LSB5344SV)
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 Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

[Senate File 2343](#) relates to the conduct of elections, including provisions related to absentee ballots, recounts, and contested gubernatorial elections and impeachments. The Bill makes the following changes:

- Updates the filing requirements for nomination papers, the recount requirements and procedures, the precinct caucus notices, the state and county funding restrictions, the candidate withdrawal deadline, the election notice requirements, the public announcement procedure at the conclusion of an election, the days permitted for canvass meetings, the time frame for the apparent winner of an election to respond to the commissioner following the election, and the requirements of both the State and the County Commissioners of Elections.
- Requires the commissioner to verify all requests upon receipt of a written request for a hand recount of a state office. If a candidate makes a hand recount request, all of their requests for that office must be for a hand recount; if not, the candidate is subject to a \$100 civil penalty for each request for that office that is not a request for a hand recount.
- Requires absentee ballots to be sent enclosed in a delivery envelope, accompanied by an affidavit envelope, a return envelope, and, if required to hide all voting ovals on the absentee ballot, a secrecy envelope.

Background

City and school board elections are on odd-numbered years and do not see large fluctuations in the number of voters from election to election. Primary and general elections, however, see an increase in the number of voters during presidential election years. **Table 1** below shows past years' total absentee ballots cast during both presidential and non-presidential year elections. Additionally, **Table 1** shows the current costs associated with absentee ballots by election type and the estimated costs under the Bill.

Table 1 — Current and Estimated Cost of Absentee Ballots by Election Type

Year	Election	Ballots
Odd-Numbered	Regular City	64,458
	Regular School	
Even-Numbered, Non-Presidential	Primary	55,193
	General	576,085
	Total	631,278
Even-Numbered, Presidential	Primary	489,258
	General	1,053,088
	Total	1,542,346

Currently, absentee ballots are sent enclosed in a delivery envelope, accompanied by a return envelope, and, if required to hide all voting ovals on the absentee ballot, a secrecy envelope. The affidavit envelope will require the voter's identification number and the voter's signature.

Assumptions

- The number of absentee ballots requested for each election type will depend on the year of the cycle.
- Presidential election years, which are years divisible by four, will have higher election turnouts. Primary elections occurring during these years will have approximately 489,000 absentee ballots. General elections during these years will have approximately 1.1 million absentee ballots.
- Non-presidential election years, which are even-numbered years that are not divisible by four, will have lower election turnouts. Primary elections occurring during these years will have approximately 55,000 absentee ballots. General elections occurring during these years will have approximately 576,000 absentee ballots.
- City and school elections, which occur on odd-numbered years, will have approximately 64,000 absentee ballots.
- Absentee ballots cost \$0.83 each. This Bill will increase the cost of absentee ballots to \$1.41 each.

Fiscal Impact

The Bill is estimated to increase the cost of absentee ballots by approximately \$37,000 during odd-numbered years, \$366,000 during even-numbered years that are not presidential election years, and \$895,000 during even-numbered years that are presidential election years. Additional estimated expenditure is due to the addition of an affidavit envelope. The fiscal impact of civil penalties for improper recount requests cannot be determined due to a lack of existing penalty data. **Table 2** summarizes the fiscal impact of each election type.

Table 2 — Estimated Fiscal Impact by Election Type

Year	Election	Current Cost	Est. Cost	Est. Increase
Odd-Numbered	Regular City	\$ 54,000	\$ 91,000	\$ 37,000
	Regular School			
Even-Numbered, Non-Presidential	Primary	\$ 46,000	\$ 78,000	\$ 32,000
	General	478,000	812,000	334,000
	Total	\$ 524,000	\$ 890,000	\$ 366,000
Even-Numbered, Presidential	Primary	\$ 406,000	\$ 690,000	\$ 284,000
	General	874,000	1,485,000	611,000
	Total	\$ 1,280,000	\$ 2,175,000	\$ 895,000

Sources

Iowa Secretary of State
 Iowa State Association of Counties
 LSA calculations

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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