

JAN 13 1997
STATE GOVERNMENT

HOUSE FILE 2023
BY CHAPMAN

Passed House, Date _____ Passed Senate, Date _____
Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____ Vote: Ayes _____ Nays _____
Approved _____

A BILL FOR

1 An Act providing special ballots for voters who are blind.
2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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HF 2023

1 Section 1. Section 49.25, subsection 3, Code Supplement
2 1997, is amended to read as follows:

3 3. The commissioner shall furnish to each precinct where
4 voting is to be by paper ballot, special paper ballot, or
5 ballot card, rather than by voting machine, the necessary
6 ballot boxes, suitably equipped with seals or locks and keys,
7 and voting booths. The voting booths shall be approved by the
8 board of examiners for voting machines and electronic voting
9 systems and shall provide for voting in secrecy. At least one
10 voting booth in each precinct shall be equipped with lights
11 and shall be accessible to persons with disabilities and to
12 persons who are blind and casting a special paper ballot. If
13 the lighting in the polling place is inadequate, the voting
14 booths used in that precinct shall ~~include~~ be equipped with
15 lights. Ballot boxes shall be locked or sealed before the
16 polls open and shall remain locked or sealed until the polls
17 are closed, except as provided in sections 51.7 and 52.40, or
18 to provide necessary service to a malfunctioning portable vote
19 tallying device. If a ballot box is opened prior to the
20 closing of the polls, two precinct election officials not of
21 the same party shall be present and observe the ballot box
22 being opened.

23 Sec. 2. Section 49.57, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code
24 Supplement 1997, is amended to read as follows:

25 Ballots shall be prepared as follows, except as otherwise
26 provided in section 49.90:

27 Sec. 3. Section 49.90, Code 1997, is amended by adding the
28 following new unnumbered paragraph:

29 NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. In lieu of receiving assistance
30 at the polling place, for any election held in the county, a
31 voter who is blind may request, in writing, that the
32 commissioner of elections prepare a special paper ballot for
33 the voter to mark on election day at the polling place. The
34 entire ballot shall be printed in capital letters of uniform
35 size in not less than fourteen point type or shall be printed

1 in braille. The written request shall specify whether the
2 voter wishes to have the ballot printed in large type or in
3 braille. The written request must be received in the office
4 of the county commissioner no later than five p.m. on the
5 eighty-ninth day before the date of the election for which the
6 special paper ballot is requested. The special paper ballot
7 shall be handled by election officials in the same manner as a
8 ballot voted with assistance pursuant to this section.

9 Sec. 4. Section 53.2, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code
10 Supplement 1997, is amended to read as follows:

11 Any registered voter, under the circumstances specified in
12 section 53.1, may on any day, except election day, and not
13 more than seventy days prior to the date of the election,
14 apply in person for an absentee ballot at the commissioner's
15 office or at any location designated by the commissioner, or
16 make written application to the commissioner for an absentee
17 ballot. However, a person who is blind and who is requesting
18 a special absentee ballot must submit a written request for
19 the special absentee ballot pursuant to this section no later
20 than five p.m. on the eighty-ninth day before the date of the
21 election. The state commissioner shall prescribe a form for
22 absentee ballot applications. However, if a registered voter
23 submits an application that includes all of the information
24 required in this section, the prescribed form is not required.
25 Absentee ballot applications may include instructions to send
26 the application directly to the county commissioner of
27 elections. However, no absentee ballot application shall be
28 preaddressed or printed with instructions to send the
29 applications to anyone other than the appropriate
30 commissioner.

31 Sec. 5. Section 53.2, Code Supplement 1997, is amended by
32 adding the following new unnumbered paragraph:

33 NEW UNNUMBERED PARAGRAPH. A voter who is blind and who
34 requests an absentee ballot may, at that time, also request,
35 in writing, that the commissioner of elections prepare a

1 special absentee ballot for the voter to mark. The ballot and
2 the affidavit that accompanies the ballot shall be printed in
3 capital letters of uniform size in not less than fourteen
4 point type or shall be printed in braille. The written
5 request shall specify whether the voter wishes to have the
6 special absentee ballot printed in large type or in braille.

7 Sec. 6. Section 53.15, unnumbered paragraph 2, Code 1997,
8 is amended to read as follows:

9 Registered voters who are blind, cannot read, or because of
10 any other physical disability, are unable to mark their own
11 absentee ballot, may have the assistance of any person the
12 registered voter may select. Registered voters who are blind
13 may also request a special absentee ballot provided for in
14 section 53.2.

15 EXPLANATION

16 This bill allows a voter who is blind to request a special
17 paper ballot printed in large type or printed in braille. The
18 written request for a special paper ballot must be made to the
19 county commissioner of elections at least 89 days before the
20 date of the election for which the special paper ballot is
21 requested. An absentee ballot may be requested in this manner
22 also.

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HOUSE FILE 2023

H-8004

1 Amend House File 2023 as follows:

- 2 1. Page 1, line 12, by striking the words
3 "special paper" and inserting the following: "large
4 print ballot or a braille".
- 5 2. Page 1, line 32, by striking the words
6 "special paper" and inserting the following: "large
7 print ballot or a braille".
- 8 3. Page 1, line 33, by striking the word "The".
- 9 4. By striking page 1, line 34, through page 2,
10 line 1, and inserting the following: "Large print
11 ballots shall be printed in capital letters of uniform
12 size in not less than fourteen point type. The
13 written request shall specify whether the".
- 14 5. Page 2, by striking line 6, and inserting the
15 following: "large print ballot or the braille ballot
16 is requested. The ballot".
- 17 6. Page 2, line 18, by striking the words "special
18 absentee" and inserting the following: "large print
19 ballot or a braille".
- 20 7. Page 2, line 19, by striking the words
21 "special absentee".
- 22 8. Page 3, line 1, by striking the word "special"
23 and inserting the following: "large print absentee
24 ballot or a braille".
- 25 9. Page 3, line 6, by striking the words "special
26 absentee".
- 27 10. Page 3, line 13, by striking the words
28 "special absentee" and inserting the following:
29 "large print ballot or a braille".

By CHAPMAN of Linn

H-8004 FILED JANUARY 28, 1998