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SENATE FILE 284  
BY BOLKCOM

Passed Senate, Date \_\_\_\_\_ Passed House, Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_ Vote: Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Nays \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to combined absentee ballot and voter  
2 registration requests.  
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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SF 284  
STATE GOVERNMENT

1 Section 1. Section 53.2, Code 2001, is amended to read as  
2 follows:

3 53.2 APPLICATION FOR BALLOT.

4 ~~Any-registered-voter~~ An eligible elector, under the  
5 circumstances specified in section 53.1, may on any day,  
6 except election day, and not more than seventy days prior to  
7 the date of the election, apply in person for an absentee  
8 ballot at the commissioner's office or at any location  
9 designated by the commissioner, or make written application to  
10 the commissioner for an absentee ballot. The state  
11 commissioner shall prescribe a form for absentee ballot  
12 applications. However, if ~~a-registered-voter~~ an eligible  
13 elector submits an application that includes all of the  
14 information required in this section, the prescribed form is  
15 not required. Absentee ballot applications may include  
16 instructions to send the application directly to the county  
17 commissioner of elections. However, no absentee ballot  
18 application shall be preaddressed or printed with instructions  
19 to send the applications to anyone other than the appropriate  
20 commissioner.

21 No absentee ballot application shall be preaddressed or  
22 printed with instructions to send the ballot to anyone other  
23 than the voter.

24 This section does not require that a written communication  
25 mailed to the commissioner's office to request an absentee  
26 ballot, or any other document be notarized as a prerequisite  
27 to receiving or marking an absentee ballot or returning to the  
28 commissioner an absentee ballot which has been voted.

29 Each application shall contain ~~the-name-and-signature-of~~  
30 ~~the-registered-voter, the-address-at-which-the-voter-is~~  
31 ~~registered-to-vote,~~ all the information required in section  
32 48A.11 and shall be sufficient to constitute voter  
33 registration. The commissioner shall place the eligible  
34 elector's name on the registration record as a registered  
35 voter, if it does not already appear there. If the name

1 already appears on the registration record but any correction  
2 is needed, the commissioner shall make such correction using  
3 the information submitted on the application. The application  
4 shall also contain and the name or date of the election for  
5 which the absentee ballot is requested, and such other  
6 information as may be necessary to determine the correct  
7 absentee ballot for the registered-voter eligible elector. If  
8 insufficient information has been provided, the commissioner  
9 shall, by the best means available, obtain the additional  
10 necessary information.

11 An application for a primary election ballot which  
12 specifies a party different from that recorded on the  
13 registered voter's voter registration record shall be accepted  
14 as a change or declaration of party affiliation. The  
15 commissioner shall approve the change or declaration and enter  
16 a notation of the change on the registration records. A  
17 notice shall be sent with the ballot requested informing the  
18 voter that the voter's registration record will be changed to  
19 show that the voter is now affiliated with the party whose  
20 ballot the voter requested.

21 If an application for an absentee ballot is received from  
22 an eligible elector who is not a registered voter the  
23 commissioner shall register the eligible elector as provided  
24 in this section send-a-registration-form-under-section-48A:8  
25 and-an-absentee-ballot-to-the-eligible-elector. If the  
26 application is received so late that it-is-unlikely-that the  
27 registration form-can-be-returned-in-time-to cannot be  
28 effective on-election-day, the commissioner shall enclose-with  
29 the-absentee-ballot send a notice to that effect, informing  
30 the voter of the registration time limits in section 48A.9.  
31 The-commissioner-shall-record-on-the-elector's-application  
32 that-the-elector-is-not-currently-registered-to-vote.--If-the  
33 registration-form-is-properly-returned-by-the-time-provided-by  
34 section-48A:9-the-commissioner-shall-record-on-the-elector's  
35 application-the-date-of-receipt-of-the-registration-form-and

1 enter-a-notation-of-the-registration-on-the-registration  
2 records-

3 A-registered-voter-who-has-not-moved-from-the-county-in  
4 which-the-elector-is-registered-to-vote-may-submit-a-change-of  
5 name,-telephone-number,-or-address-on-the-form-prescribed-in  
6 section-48A-8-when-casting-an-absentee-ballot.--Upon-receipt  
7 of-a-properly-completed-form,-the-commissioner-shall-enter-a  
8 notation-of-the-change-on-the-registration-records-

9 Sec. 2. Section 53.22, subsection 1, paragraph a,  
10 unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2001, is amended to read as  
11 follows:

12 A An eligible elector or registered voter who has applied  
13 for an absentee ballot, in a manner other than that prescribed  
14 by section 53.11, and who is a resident or patient in a health  
15 care facility or hospital located in the county to which the  
16 application has been submitted shall be delivered the  
17 appropriate absentee ballot by two special precinct election  
18 officers, one of whom shall be a member of each of the  
19 political parties referred to in section 49.13, who shall be  
20 appointed by the commissioner from the election board panel  
21 for the special precinct established by section 53.20. The  
22 special precinct election officers shall be sworn in the  
23 manner provided by section 49.75 for election board members,  
24 shall receive compensation as provided in section 49.20 and  
25 shall perform their duties during the ten calendar days  
26 preceding the election and on election day if all ballots  
27 requested under section 53.8, subsection 3, have not  
28 previously been delivered and returned.

29 Sec. 3. Section 53.22, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code  
30 2001, is amended to read as follows:

31 c. The special precinct election officers shall travel  
32 together in the same vehicle and both shall be present when an  
33 applicant casts an absentee ballot. If either or both of the  
34 special precinct election officers fail to appear at the time  
35 the duties set forth in this section are to be performed, the

1 commissioner shall at once appoint some other person, giving  
2 preference to persons designated by the respective county  
3 chairpersons of the political parties described in section  
4 49.13, to carry out the requirements of this section. The  
5 persons authorized by this subsection to deliver an absentee  
6 ballot to an applicant, if requested, may assist the applicant  
7 in filling out the ballot as permitted by section 49.90.  
8 After the eligible elector or registered voter has securely  
9 sealed the marked ballot in the envelope provided and has  
10 subscribed to the oath, the voted absentee ballots shall be  
11 deposited in a sealed container which shall be returned to the  
12 commissioner on the same day the ballots are voted. On  
13 election day the officers shall return the sealed container by  
14 the time the polls are closed.

15 Sec. 4. Section 53.22, subsection 4, Code 2001, is amended  
16 to read as follows:

17 4. The commissioner shall mail an absentee ballot to ~~a~~ an  
18 eligible elector or registered voter who has applied for an  
19 absentee ballot and who is a patient or resident of a hospital  
20 or health care facility outside the county in which the voter  
21 is registered to vote.

22 EXPLANATION

23 This bill combines a voter registration form with a request  
24 for an absentee ballot so that any request for an absentee  
25 ballot is also treated as a request to register to vote. The  
26 county commissioner shall use the information on the absentee  
27 ballot application to register persons not already appearing  
28 on the registration record, or to update registration  
29 information for voters already appearing on the record. The  
30 practice of sending a separate voter registration form along  
31 with an absentee ballot is no longer needed.

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