House File 29 - Introduced

A BILL FOR

1 An Act authorizing certain cities to conduct city elections by
2 absentee ballot.
3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1   Section 1. Section 376.1, Code 2015, is amended to read as
2 follows:
3   **376.1 City election held —— absentee ballot elections**
4 **authorized.**
5   1. A city shall hold a regular city election on the first
6 Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each odd-numbered
7 year. A city shall hold regular, special, primary, or runoff
8 city elections as provided by state law.
9   2. The mayor or council shall give notice of any special
10 election to the county commissioner of elections. The county
11 commissioner of elections shall publish notice of any city
12 election and conduct the election pursuant to the provisions of
13 chapters 39 to 53, except as otherwise specifically provided
14 in chapters 362 to 392. The results of any election shall be
15 canvassed by the county board of supervisors and certified
16 by the county commissioner of elections to the mayor and the
17 council of the city for which the election is held.
18   3. *a.* The council of a city with a population of two
19 hundred or less according to the most recent federal decennial
20 census may adopt an ordinance providing that elections be
21 conducted by absentee ballot. If the city council adopts
22 such an ordinance, the clerk shall notify the commissioner
23 of elections of the adoption of the ordinance, and the
24 commissioner shall mail an absentee ballot application form
25 by forwardable mail to each registered voter within the city
26 who is on active status pursuant to section 48A.37 no fewer
27 than twenty-five days before each regular city election or
28 special election for the city. The commissioner shall also
29 enclose a postage paid return envelope and a notice in the form
30 prescribed by the state commissioner informing the voter that
31 voting in person on election day will also be available at the
32 commissioner's office during the time the polls are open. The
33 commissioner may designate one additional site as an election
34 day polling place for a city that adopts an ordinance pursuant
35 to this subsection. The location of the additional polling

1 place shall be included in the notice to the voter.

2   *b.*   The additional polling place designated under this

3 subsection is subject to the requirements of section 49.21

4 relating to accessibility to persons with disabilities

5 and relating to the posting of signs. The location of the

6 additional polling place shall be published by the county

7 commissioner of elections as required by section 49.53.

8   *c.*   The provisions of chapter 53, insofar as applicable,

9 shall apply to absentee ballot elections authorized under this

10 subsection.

11   *d.*   The county commissioner of elections conducting an

12 election pursuant to this subsection shall submit a report

13 to the state commissioner of elections within sixty days

14 following the election. The report shall include information

15 on the number of voters who were sent an absentee ballot, the

16 number of returned absentee ballots, the number of voters who

17 cast ballots at the county commissioner's office, whether

18 an additional site was made available as a polling place

19 on election day pursuant to paragraph "*a*", and, if such an

20 additional site was made available, the number of voters who

21 cast ballots at that site, and any obstacles encountered in the

22 voting process for the election. The state commissioner shall

23 submit a copy of the report to the chairpersons and ranking

24 members of the general assembly's standing committees on state

25 government within ten days following the receipt of the report.

26   EXPLANATION

27   **The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with**

28   **the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.**

29   This bill authorizes certain cities to conduct city

30 elections by absentee ballot.

31   The bill allows cities with populations of 200 or less to

32 adopt an ordinance providing that city elections be conducted

33 by absentee ballot. The bill requires the county commissioner

34 of elections responsible for conducting elections for such a

35 city to mail an absentee ballot application form by forwardable

1 mail to each active status registered voter within the city
2 no fewer than 25 days before each regular city election or
3 special election for that city. The bill requires that the
4 county commissioner of elections also enclose a postage paid
5 return envelope and a notice that in-person voting will also
6 be available at the county commissioner's office on the day of
7 the election and, if applicable, the location of the additional
8 polling place. The bill allows the county commissioner to
9 designate one additional election day polling place for such
10 cities.
11   The bill further requires the county commissioner of
12 elections to submit a report on the city election to the
13 state commissioner of elections within 60 days following the
14 city election. The bill further requires that the state
15 commissioner submit a copy of the report to the chairpersons
16 and ranking members of the general assembly's standing
17 committees on state government.