HOUSE FILE 506 BY COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 146)

A BILL FOR

- 1 An Act related to absentee ballot deadlines.
- 2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 53.17, subsection 1, paragraph b, Code
2 2015, is amended to read as follows:

b. The sealed return envelope may be mailed to the
commissioner by the registered voter or by the voter's
designee. If mailed by the voter's designee, the envelope
must be mailed within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from
the voter or within time to be postmarked not later than the
day before the election received in the commissioner's office
before the polls close on election day, whichever is earlier.
Sec. 2. Section 53.17, subsections 2 and 3, Code 2015, are

11 amended to read as follows:

12 2. In order for the ballot to be counted, the return 13 envelope must be received in the commissioner's office before 14 the polls close on election day or be clearly postmarked by 15 an officially authorized postal service not later than the 16 day before the election and received by the commissioner not 17 later than noon on the Monday following the election, except 18 for ballots received from a member of the armed forces of the 19 United States pursuant to subchapter II of this chapter, which 20 must be received by noon on the day before the supervisors 21 canvass the votes.

22 If the law authorizing the election specifies that 3. 23 the supervisors canvass the votes earlier than the Monday 24 following the election, absentee ballots returned through the 25 mail must be received not later than the time established for 26 the canvass by the board of supervisors for that election. 27 The commissioner shall contact the post office serving the 28 commissioner's office at the latest practicable hour before 29 the canvass by the board of supervisors 10:00 a.m. on the day 30 before the board of supervisors canvass the votes for that 31 election, and shall arrange for absentee ballots received in 32 that post office but not yet delivered to the commissioner's 33 office to be brought to the commissioner's office before the 34 canvass for that election by the board of supervisors noon on 35 that day.

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Sec. 3. Section 53.17, subsection 4, paragraph f, Code 2015, 1 2 is amended to read as follows:

f. A statement that the completed absentee ballot will 3 4 be delivered to the commissioner's office within seventy-two 5 hours of retrieving it from the voter or before the closing of 6 the polls on election day, whichever is earlier, or that the 7 completed absentee ballot will be mailed to the commissioner 8 within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the voter or 9 within time to be postmarked not later than the day before the 10 election received in the commissioner's office before the polls 11 close on election day, whichever is earlier.

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EXPLANATION

The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with 13 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

15 This bill relates to absentee ballot deadlines. Under 16 current law, an absentee ballot received by a county 17 commissioner of elections is valid if it is received by the 18 commissioner before the polls close on election day or if it is 19 clearly postmarked by an officially authorized postal service 20 not later than the day before the election and is received by 21 the commissioner not later than noon on the Monday following 22 the election. Under the bill, for an absentee ballot to be 23 valid it must be received by the commissioner before the polls 24 close on election day, unless the absentee ballot is completed 25 by a military or overseas voter. The bill provides that for 26 a military or overseas voter's ballot to be valid, it must be 27 received by noon on the day before the supervisors canvass the 28 votes.

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The bill makes additional corresponding changes.

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