

**Senate File 56 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 56

BY JOCHUM

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act providing for the registration of eligible electors upon  
2 review of electronic records received from state agencies  
3 and including effective date provisions.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 48A.7, Code 2019, is amended to read as  
2 follows:

3 **48A.7 Registration in person.**

4 An eligible elector may register to vote by appearing  
5 personally and completing a voter registration form at the  
6 office of the commissioner in the county in which the person  
7 resides, at a motor vehicle driver's license station, including  
8 any county treasurer's office that is participating in county  
9 issuance of driver's licenses under [chapter 321M](#), or at any  
10 voter registration agency. A For paper registration forms,  
11 a separate voter registration form shall be signed by each  
12 individual registrant.

13 Sec. 2. Section 48A.8, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended  
14 to read as follows:

15 1. An eligible elector may request that a voter registration  
16 form be mailed to the elector. The completed form may be  
17 mailed or delivered by the registrant or the registrant's  
18 designee to the commissioner in the county where the person  
19 resides or to the state commissioner of elections for a  
20 program participant, as provided in [section 9E.6](#). A For paper  
21 registration forms, a separate voter registration form shall be  
22 signed by each individual registrant.

23 Sec. 3. Section 48A.18, subsections 1 and 3, Code 2019, are  
24 amended to read as follows:

25 1. Each state motor vehicle driver's license application,  
26 including any renewal application or application for a  
27 nonoperator's identification card, submitted to the office  
28 of driver services of the state department of transportation  
29 shall serve as an application for voter registration unless  
30 the commissioner of registration determines that the applicant  
31 is not an eligible elector or the applicant declines to  
32 register to vote after receiving notification under subsection  
33 4A. A completed application or paper voter registration  
34 form submitted to the office of driver services of the state  
35 department of transportation shall be considered to update any

1 previous voter registration by the registrant.

2 3. Information relating to the ~~refusal~~ decision of an  
3 applicant for a driver's license to ~~apply~~ decline to register  
4 to vote shall not be used for any purpose other than voter  
5 registration.

6 Sec. 4. Section 48A.18, subsection 4, Code 2019, is amended  
7 by striking the subsection and inserting in lieu thereof the  
8 following:

9 4. *a.* The state voter registration commission shall  
10 establish schedules by which the department of transportation  
11 shall transmit to the state registrar of voters electronic  
12 records containing the legal name, age, residence, and  
13 citizenship information for, and the electronic signature of,  
14 each person submitting an application under this section.

15 *b.* The state voter registration commission shall establish  
16 schedules by which the state registrar of voters shall make  
17 accessible or transmit electronic records and electronic  
18 signatures received under paragraph "a" to the appropriate  
19 commissioner of registration.

20 *c.* The state voter registration commission shall establish  
21 schedules by which the department of transportation shall  
22 transmit any completed paper registration forms to the  
23 appropriate commissioner of registration.

24 *d.* The state commissioner of elections shall adopt rules,  
25 consistent with section 9E.6, for the registration of address  
26 confidentiality program participants.

27 *e.* The state voter registration commission shall adopt  
28 rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer and interpret this  
29 section, including rules to establish electronic and paper  
30 forms and all procedures used by the office of driver services  
31 for voter registration purposes, rules to establish schedules  
32 for transmission of electronic records, electronic signatures,  
33 and completed paper voter registration forms, and rules and  
34 forms to decline being registered to vote.

35 Sec. 5. Section 48A.18, Code 2019, is amended by adding the

1 following new subsection:

2 NEW SUBSECTION. 4A. a. (1) Upon receiving the electronic  
3 record for, and electronic signature of, a person under  
4 subsection 4, the state registrar of voters shall transmit or  
5 otherwise make accessible the electronic record and electronic  
6 signature of the person to the commissioner of registration  
7 of the county where the person resides. Upon reviewing the  
8 electronic record received from the state registrar of voters,  
9 along with any other relevant information, the commissioner of  
10 registration shall determine if a person is an eligible elector  
11 of the county. If the commissioner determines that a person is  
12 an eligible elector of the county and is not registered to vote  
13 in that county, the commissioner shall notify the person of the  
14 separate processes to decline being registered to vote or to  
15 declare a political party affiliation.

16 (2) If the person is registered to vote in the county, the  
17 commissioner shall use the electronic record and information to  
18 update the person's voter registration if appropriate.

19 b. If a person notified under paragraph "a" does not decline  
20 to be registered to vote within twenty-one calendar days after  
21 the commissioner of registration issues the notification, the  
22 person's electronic record and electronic signature shall  
23 constitute a completed voter registration form under section  
24 48A.11, and the commissioner of registration shall register the  
25 person to vote in that county. The commissioner shall send an  
26 acknowledgment pursuant to section 48A.26.

27 c. A commissioner of registration shall not add a person  
28 subject to registration under this subsection to a voter  
29 registration list until at least twenty-one calendar days  
30 after the commissioner has issued notification to the person  
31 as described in paragraph "a".

32 d. The electronic record and electronic signature, received  
33 under this subsection, of a person who does not qualify  
34 as an eligible elector shall not constitute a completed  
35 voter registration form under section 48A.11 and such a

1 person's application for a driver's license or nonoperator's  
2 identification card shall not be considered to be a voter  
3 registration application for purposes of section 39A.2,  
4 subsection 1, paragraph "a".

5 Sec. 6. Section 48A.19, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended  
6 by adding the following new paragraph:

7 NEW PARAGRAPH. *d.* The department of education, the board  
8 of regents and each institution administered by the board  
9 of regents, and all state offices that collect personal  
10 information sufficient to complete a voter registration  
11 application, as determined by the state commissioner.

12 Sec. 7. Section 48A.19, subsection 4, paragraph a,  
13 unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2019, is amended to read as  
14 follows:

15 The A voter registration agency that does not collect  
16 personal information sufficient to complete a voter  
17 registration application shall provide a form to applicants  
18 that includes all of the following:

19 Sec. 8. Section 48A.21, Code 2019, is amended to read as  
20 follows:

21 **48A.21 Transmission of forms from agencies and driver's**  
22 **license stations.**

23 1. The state registrar of voters shall adopt administrative  
24 rules regulating the transmission of completed voter  
25 registration forms from voter registration agencies and from  
26 driver's license stations, including county treasurer's offices  
27 participating in county issuance of driver's licenses under  
28 ~~chapter 321M~~. All completed voter registration applications  
29 in the possession of a voter registration agency, a driver's  
30 license station, or a county treasurer's office that is  
31 participating in county issuance of driver's licenses at 5:00  
32 p.m. on the last workday of each week shall be transmitted  
33 to the location designated by the state registrar of voters  
34 by rule. Procedures or requirements for more frequent  
35 transmissions may be specified by rule.

1     2. a. The state voter registration commission shall  
2 establish schedules by which the voter registration agencies  
3 pursuant to section 48A.19 that collect personal information  
4 sufficient to complete a voter registration application shall  
5 transmit to the state registrar of voters electronic records  
6 containing the legal name, age, residence, and citizenship  
7 information for, and the electronic signature of, each person  
8 providing personal information as described in this section.

9     b. The state voter registration commission shall establish  
10 schedules by which the state registrar of voters shall make  
11 accessible or transmit electronic records and electronic  
12 signatures received under paragraph "a" to the appropriate  
13 commissioner of registration.

14     c. The state voter registration commission shall establish  
15 schedules by which voter registration agencies shall transmit  
16 any completed paper registration forms to the appropriate  
17 commissioner of registration.

18     d. The state commissioner of elections shall adopt rules,  
19 consistent with section 9E.6, for the registration of address  
20 confidentiality program participants.

21     e. The state voter registration commission shall adopt  
22 rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer and interpret this  
23 section, including rules to establish electronic and paper  
24 forms and all procedures used by voter registration agencies  
25 for voter registration purposes, rules to establish schedules  
26 for transmission of electronic records, electronic signatures,  
27 and completed paper voter registration forms, and rules and  
28 forms to decline being registered to vote.

29     3. a. (1) Upon receiving the electronic record for, and  
30 electronic signature of, a person under subsection 2, the state  
31 registrar of voters shall transmit or otherwise make accessible  
32 the electronic record and electronic signature of the person to  
33 the commissioner of registration of the county where the person  
34 resides. Upon reviewing the electronic record received from  
35 the state registrar of voters, along with any other relevant

1 information, the commissioner of registration shall determine  
2 if a person is an eligible elector of the county. If the  
3 commissioner determines that a person is an eligible elector  
4 of the county and is not registered to vote in that county, the  
5 commissioner shall notify the person of the separate processes  
6 to decline being registered to vote or to declare a political  
7 party affiliation.

8 (2) If the person is registered to vote in the county, the  
9 commissioner shall use the electronic record and information to  
10 update the person's voter registration if appropriate.

11 b. If a person notified under paragraph "a" does not decline  
12 to be registered to vote within twenty-one calendar days after  
13 the commissioner of registration issues the notification, the  
14 person's electronic record and electronic signature shall  
15 constitute a completed voter registration form under section  
16 48A.11, and the commissioner of registration shall register the  
17 person to vote in that county. The commissioner shall send an  
18 acknowledgment pursuant to section 48A.26.

19 c. A commissioner of registration shall not add a person  
20 subject to registration under this subsection to a voter  
21 registration list until at least twenty-one calendar days  
22 after the commissioner has issued notification to the person  
23 as described in paragraph "a".

24 d. The electronic record and electronic signature, received  
25 under this subsection, of a person who does not qualify as  
26 an eligible elector shall not constitute a completed voter  
27 registration form under section 48A.11 and such a person shall  
28 not be considered to have submitted a voter registration  
29 application for purposes of section 39A.2, subsection 1,  
30 paragraph "a".

31 Sec. 9. Section 48A.26, subsection 1, paragraph b, Code  
32 2019, is amended to read as follows:

33 b. (1) For a voter registration form or change of  
34 information in a voter registration record submitted at a  
35 precinct caucus, the commissioner shall send an acknowledgment

1 within forty-five days of receipt of the form or change of  
2 information.

3 (2) For a voter registration application or change of  
4 information in a voter registration record completed pursuant  
5 to section 48A.18 or 48A.19, the commissioner shall send an  
6 acknowledgment within seven working days of the person being  
7 registered under either section.

8 Sec. 10. Section 48A.26, subsection 8, Code 2019, is amended  
9 to read as follows:

10 8. ~~An~~ A completed voter registration application,  
11 improperly transmitted under section 48A.18, subsection  
12 4A, or under section 48A.21, subsection 2, or an improperly  
13 addressed or delivered registration form shall be transmitted  
14 or forwarded to the appropriate county commissioner of  
15 registration within two working days after it is received by  
16 any other official. The date of registration shall be the date  
17 the completed application or registration form was received by  
18 the first official. If the registration form was postmarked  
19 fifteen or more days before an election and the registration  
20 form was received by the first official after the close of  
21 registration, the registration form shall be considered on time  
22 for the election.

23 Sec. 11. Section 48A.36, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended  
24 to read as follows:

25 1. ~~Voter registration agencies and the office of driver~~  
26 ~~services of the state department of transportation may~~  
27 ~~electronically transmit registration data to the state~~  
28 ~~registrar of voters, who shall distribute the information,~~  
29 ~~electronically or otherwise, to the appropriate commissioner~~  
30 ~~in accordance with rules of the state voter registration~~  
31 ~~commission and the state registrar of voters. The office of~~  
32 driver services of the state department of transportation and  
33 voter registration agencies that collect personal information  
34 sufficient to complete a voter registration application  
35 shall electronically transmit registration data to the state



1 registrar of voters as required pursuant to sections 48A.18  
2 and 48A.21. The state agency originating the registration  
3 data shall permanently retain an electronic copy of the  
4 form completed by the registrant, including the registrant's  
5 signature, and shall develop procedures for the retrieval and  
6 printing of that electronic document. A printed copy of an  
7 electronic registration document shall be made only upon the  
8 agency's receipt of a court order.

9 Sec. 12. Section 331.557A, subsection 5, Code 2019, is  
10 amended to read as follows:

11 5. Participate in voter registration according to the  
12 terms of chapter 48A, and submit completed voter registration  
13 forms to the ~~state registrar of voters~~ appropriate county  
14 commissioner of registration.

15 Sec. 13. EMERGENCY RULES. The state voter registration  
16 commission, in cooperation with the department of  
17 transportation and voter registration agencies, may adopt  
18 emergency rules under section 17A.4, subsection 3, and section  
19 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b", to implement the provisions  
20 of this Act and the rules shall be effective immediately upon  
21 filing unless a later date is specified in the rules. Any  
22 rules adopted in accordance with this section shall also be  
23 published as a notice of intended action as provided in section  
24 17A.4.

25 Sec. 14. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT. Section 25B.2, subsection  
26 3, shall not apply to this Act.

27 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE UPON ENACTMENT. This Act, being deemed  
28 of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

29

EXPLANATION

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

32 This bill provides for the registration of eligible electors  
33 upon review of electronic records received from state agencies.

34 The bill allows for registration of eligible electors  
35 to vote following review of electronic records received

1 from driver's license and nonoperator's identification card  
2 applications by county commissioners of registration (county  
3 auditors).

4 The bill requires that the office of driver services of the  
5 department of transportation transmit to the state registrar of  
6 voters (the secretary of state) electronic records containing  
7 the legal name, age, residence, and citizenship information  
8 for, and the electronic signature of, each person submitting  
9 an application for a driver's license or nonoperator's  
10 identification card, or any renewal application. Current Code  
11 section 321.182 requires that an application for a license  
12 or card include an applicant's full name, signature, current  
13 mailing address, current residential address, date of birth,  
14 social security number, and other information. Under current  
15 administrative rules of the state department of transportation,  
16 an applicant for a license or card is required to provide proof  
17 of lawful status in the United States. Also under current  
18 administrative rules, a person's signature for a driver's  
19 license or nonoperator's identification card application is  
20 required to be captured electronically. Under current law,  
21 a county treasurer's office participating in county issuance  
22 of driver's licenses is required to participate in voter  
23 registration to the same extent as a license facility of the  
24 state department of transportation.

25 The bill requires the state registrar of voters to transmit  
26 the electronic records and electronic signatures to the county  
27 commissioner of registration of the county where the person  
28 resides. The bill requires that the county commissioner review  
29 the electronic record and any other relevant information to  
30 determine if a person is an eligible elector. If the county  
31 commissioner determines a person to be an eligible elector  
32 and the person is not registered to vote in the county, the  
33 county commissioner is required to notify the person of the  
34 separate processes to decline to register to vote or to declare  
35 a political party affiliation. If a notified person fails to

1 decline voter registration within 21 days after the county  
2 commissioner issued the notification, the bill provides that  
3 the electronic record and electronic signature shall constitute  
4 a completed voter registration form for that person and the  
5 bill requires the county commissioner to register the person to  
6 vote in that county and send the person an acknowledgment as  
7 required by current law.

8 The bill prohibits a county commissioner from adding a  
9 person's name to a voter registration list until at least 21  
10 days after the commissioner has issued notification to the  
11 person. The bill requires that a county commissioner send an  
12 acknowledgment of registration within seven business days of  
13 registering a person under the bill. The bill also provides  
14 that the electronic record and electronic signature of a person  
15 who does not qualify as an eligible elector does not constitute  
16 a completed voter registration form. Under the bill, such a  
17 person submitting an application for a license or card will not  
18 be subject to charges for voter registration fraud under Code  
19 section 39A.2 for submitting such an application.

20 The bill also grants the state voter registration commission  
21 the authority to adopt rules to administer and interpret the  
22 provisions of the bill relating to voter registration at motor  
23 vehicle driver's license stations. If interpretive rulemaking  
24 authority is clearly vested in the discretion of an agency by  
25 statute, the applicable judicial standard of review is whether  
26 the rules constitute an irrational, illogical, or wholly  
27 unjustifiable interpretation of law by the agency (Code section  
28 17A.19(10)(1)). If interpretive rulemaking authority is not  
29 clearly vested in the discretion of an agency, the applicable  
30 judicial standard of review is whether the rules constitute an  
31 erroneous interpretation of law (Code section 17A.19(10)(c)).

32 The bill makes changes to current law related to address  
33 confidentiality program participants under Code chapter  
34 9E by requiring the state registrar to adopt rules for  
35 administration of registration for those participants. The

1 bill maintains current law to allow for submission of a paper  
2 voter registration form through driver's license offices. The  
3 bill specifies that a requirement that separate registration  
4 forms be signed by each individual registrant only applies to  
5 paper registration forms. Under the bill, driver's license  
6 offices are required to transmit voter registration forms  
7 to the appropriate county commissioner and to transmit all  
8 electronic records and electronic signatures to the state  
9 registrar of voters.

10 Under current law, the state registrar of voters is  
11 required to establish rules regulating transmission of voter  
12 registration forms from driver's license stations and voter  
13 registration agencies. Under the bill, such rules are required  
14 to be established by the state commission.

15 The bill also allows for automatic voter registration  
16 to be completed based upon information received from voter  
17 registration agencies, including, under the bill, the  
18 department of education, the board of regents and each  
19 institution governed by the board of regents, and other  
20 state offices that collect personal information sufficient to  
21 complete a voter registration application.

22 The bill provides that the state voter registration  
23 commission, in cooperation with the department of  
24 transportation and voter registration agencies, may adopt  
25 emergency rules to implement the provisions of the bill.

26 The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code  
27 section 25B.3. The bill makes inapplicable Code section 25B.2,  
28 subsection 3, which would relieve a political subdivision from  
29 complying with a state mandate if funding for the cost of  
30 the state mandate is not provided or specified. Therefore,  
31 political subdivisions are required to comply with any state  
32 mandate included in the bill.

33 The bill takes effect upon enactment.