

Senate File 2158 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2158

BY CARLIN

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the printing and counting of absentee
2 ballots by requiring a watermark, and including effective
3 date provisions.

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

1 Section 1. Section 43.27, Code 2022, is amended to read as
2 follows:

3 **43.27 Printing of ballots.**

4 1. The text printed on ballots of each political party
5 shall be in black ink, on separate sheets of paper, uniform
6 in quality, texture, and size, with the name of the political
7 party printed at the head of the ballots, which ballots shall
8 be prepared by the commissioner in the same manner as for the
9 general election, except as provided in [this chapter](#). The
10 commissioner may print the ballots for each political party
11 using a different color for each party. If colored paper is
12 used, all of the ballots for each separate party shall be
13 uniform in color.

14 2. Each absentee ballot shall include a watermark
15 approved by the state commissioner. The watermark shall be
16 easily discernible for verification purposes by the county
17 commissioner and the absentee and special voters precinct
18 election board. The state commissioner shall adopt rules for
19 the implementation of this subsection.

20 Sec. 2. Section 49.57, Code 2022, is amended by adding the
21 following new subsection:

22 NEW SUBSECTION. 8. Each absentee ballot shall include a
23 watermark approved by the state commissioner. The watermark
24 shall be easily discernible for verification purposes by
25 the county commissioner and the absentee and special voters
26 precinct election board. The state commissioner shall adopt
27 rules for the implementation of this subsection.

28 Sec. 3. Section 53.25, subsection 1, Code 2022, is amended
29 by adding the following new paragraph:

30 NEW PARAGRAPH. *c.* If an absentee voter's ballot lacks the
31 watermark required pursuant to section 43.27 or 49.57, the
32 absentee ballot shall be rejected by the absentee and special
33 voters precinct board.

34 Sec. 4. Section 53.26, subsection 2, Code 2022, is amended
35 to read as follows:

S.F. 2158

1 and attorney general, who shall investigate the ballot for
2 potential election misconduct.

3 The bill takes effect July 1, 2023, except that the
4 state commissioner of elections may adopt rules for the
5 implementation of the bill prior to that date.