

House File 91 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 91
BY GOLDING

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the duties of the secretary of state,
2 including the address confidentiality program and the conduct
3 of elections, and including effective date provisions.
4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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DIVISION I

ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

Section 1. Section 9E.3, subsection 1, paragraphs e and f, Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

e. The residential address of the eligible person, disclosure of which could lead to an increased risk of domestic abuse, domestic abuse assault, sexual abuse, assault, stalking, or human trafficking. If the eligible person's residential address is a shelter known to the program, the applicant may provide the shelter's name and other contact information in lieu of the shelter's physical address.

f. If mail cannot be delivered to the residential address of the eligible person, the address to which mail can be sent to the eligible person. If the eligible person's mailing address is a shelter known to the program, the applicant may provide the shelter's name and other contact information in lieu of the shelter's physical address.

Sec. 2. Section 9E.4, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

2. The secretary shall cancel a program participant's certification ~~if the~~ for any of the following reasons:

a. The program participant's application contains false information.

b. The secretary receives information from a reliable source that the program participant has died.

Sec. 3. Section 9E.5, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

3. The secretary shall forward all mail sent to the designated address to the program participant. At the request of the program participant, the secretary may hold the program participant's mail for up to thirty days.

Sec. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

DIVISION II

CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY OBJECTIONS

1 Sec. 5. Section 43.18, subsection 9, Code 2025, is amended to
2 read as follows:

3 9. A For a candidate for an office other than a federal
4 office, a statement that the candidate is aware that the
5 candidate is disqualified from holding office if the candidate
6 has been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime and the
7 candidate's rights have not been restored by the governor or by
8 the president of the United States.

9 Sec. 6. Section 43.24, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended by
10 adding the following new paragraph:

11 NEW PARAGRAPH. c. Objections to the eligibility of a
12 candidate for a federal office shall not be sustained unless the
13 objection is limited to the legal sufficiency of the nomination
14 petition or certificate of nomination, or to the residency, age,
15 or citizenship requirements as described in the Constitution of
16 the United States.

17 Sec. 7. Section 44.3, subsection 2, paragraph i, Code 2025,
18 is amended to read as follows:

19 i. A For a candidate for an office other than a federal
20 office, a statement that the candidate is aware that the
21 candidate is disqualified from holding office if the candidate
22 has been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime and the
23 candidate's rights have not been restored by the governor or by
24 the president of the United States.

25 Sec. 8. Section 44.6, Code 2025, is amended to read as
26 follows:

27 **44.6 Hearing before state commissioner.**

28 Objections filed with the state commissioner shall be
29 considered by the secretary of state and auditor of state
30 and attorney general, and a majority decision shall be final.
31 However, if the objection is to the certificate of nomination of
32 one or more of the above named officers, the officer or officers
33 objected to shall not pass upon the objection, but their places
34 shall be filled, respectively, by the treasurer of state, the
35 governor, and the secretary of agriculture. Objections relating

1 to incorrect or incomplete information for information that is
2 required under section 44.3 shall be sustained. Objections
3 to the eligibility of a candidate for a federal office shall
4 not be sustained unless the objection is limited to the
5 legal sufficiency of the nomination petition or certificate of
6 nomination, or to the residency, age, or citizenship requirements
7 as described in the Constitution of the United States.

8 Sec. 9. Section 45.3, subsection 9, Code 2025, is amended to
9 read as follows:

10 9. A For a candidate for an office other than a federal
11 office, a statement that the candidate is aware that the
12 candidate is disqualified from holding office if the candidate
13 has been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime and the
14 candidate's rights have not been restored by the governor or by
15 the president of the United States.

16 Sec. 10. Section 54.5, Code 2025, is amended by adding the
17 following new subsection:

18 NEW SUBSECTION. 5. An objection to a nomination made under
19 this section on any grounds other than the legal sufficiency
20 of the certificate of nomination shall not be sustained. The
21 certificate of nomination shall be presumed valid.

22 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being
23 deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

24 DIVISION III

25 RANKED CHOICE VOTING

26 Sec. 12. Section 49.93, Code 2025, is amended to read as
27 follows:

28 **49.93 Number of votes for each office.**

29 1. For an office to which one person is to be elected, a
30 voter shall not vote for more than one candidate. If two or more
31 persons are to be elected to an office, the voter shall vote for
32 no more than the number of persons to be elected. If a person
33 votes for more than the permitted number of candidates, the vote
34 for that office shall not count. Valid votes cast on the rest of
35 the ballot shall be counted.

1 voter verification number in a form prescribed by the state
2 commissioner.

3 2. "Delivery envelope" means an envelope that bears on its
4 face the name and address of the registered voter requesting an
5 absentee ballot, the words "county commissioner of elections",
6 the address of the commissioner's office, and the same serial
7 number that appears on the affidavit envelope and return
8 envelope.

9 3. "Return envelope" means an envelope that is addressed
10 to the commissioner's office, bears appropriate return postage
11 or a postal permit guaranteeing that the commissioner will pay
12 the return postage, and includes the same serial number as the
13 affidavit envelope and delivery envelope.

14 4. "Secrecy envelope" means an envelope, folder, or sleeve
15 that hides all votes on a ballot when folded.

16 Sec. 16. Section 53.4, subsection 1, paragraph c,
17 subparagraph (2), Code 2025, is amended by striking the
18 subparagraph.

19 Sec. 17. Section 53.8, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended to
20 read as follows:

21 1. a. Upon receipt of an application for an absentee ballot
22 and immediately after the absentee ballots are printed, but
23 not more than ~~twenty~~ twenty-two days before the election, the
24 commissioner shall mail an absentee ballot to the applicant
25 within twenty-four hours, except as otherwise provided in
26 subsection 3. The absentee ballot shall be ~~sent to the~~
27 registered voter by one of the following methods: enclosed
28 in an unsealed affidavit envelope. The absentee ballot and
29 affidavit envelope shall be enclosed in or with an unsealed
30 return envelope. The absentee ballot, affidavit envelope, and
31 return envelope shall be enclosed in the delivery envelope. If
32 the ballot cannot be folded so that all the votes on the ballot
33 will be hidden, the commissioner shall also enclose a secrecy
34 envelope with the absentee ballot.

35 ~~(1) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed~~

~~1 envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit. The absentee
2 ballot and affidavit envelope shall be enclosed in or with an
3 unsealed return envelope marked postage paid which bears the same
4 serial number as the affidavit envelope. The absentee ballot,
5 affidavit envelope, and return envelope shall be enclosed in a
6 third envelope to be sent to the registered voter. If the ballot
7 cannot be folded so that all of the votes cast on the ballot will
8 be hidden, the commissioner shall also enclose a secrecy envelope
9 with the absentee ballot.~~

10 ~~(2) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed
11 return envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit and
12 marked postage paid. The absentee ballot and return envelope
13 shall be enclosed in a second envelope to be sent to the
14 registered voter. If the ballot cannot be folded so that all
15 of the votes cast on the ballot will be hidden, the commissioner
16 shall also enclose a secrecy envelope with the absentee ballot.~~

17 ~~b. The affidavit shall be marked on the appropriate envelope
18 in a form prescribed by the state commissioner of elections
19 registered voter requesting and receiving an absentee ballot
20 shall subscribe to the affidavit by signing and marking the
21 registered voter's voter verification number on the affidavit
22 envelope.~~

23 ~~c. All domestic return envelope flaps or backs shall also be
24 printed or stamped with a notice of the deadline to return a
25 completed absentee ballot and the manner to track the status of
26 the ballot in a form prescribed by the state commissioner.~~

27 ~~e. d. For envelopes mailed at any election other than the
28 primary election, the commissioner shall not mark any envelope
29 with any information related to the party affiliation of the
30 applicant.~~

31 Sec. 18. Section 53.8, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2025,
32 is amended to read as follows:

33 a. The commissioner shall enclose with the absentee ballot
34 a statement informing the applicant that the sealed return
35 envelope may be mailed to the commissioner by the registered

1 voter or a person not prohibited to collect and deliver a
2 completed ballot pursuant to section 53.33, ~~may be returned to~~
3 ~~a drop box established by the commissioner pursuant to section~~
4 ~~53.17, subsection 1, by the registered voter or a person not~~
5 ~~prohibited to collect and deliver a completed ballot pursuant to~~
6 ~~section 53.33, only if the commissioner has established such a~~
7 ~~drop box,~~ or may be personally delivered to the commissioner's
8 office by the registered voter or a person not prohibited to
9 collect and deliver a completed ballot pursuant to section 53.33.
10 The statement shall also inform the voter that the voter may
11 request that the person not prohibited to collect and deliver
12 a completed ballot pursuant to section 53.33 complete a receipt
13 when retrieving the ballot from the voter. A blank receipt shall
14 be enclosed with the absentee ballot.

15 Sec. 19. Section 53.10, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2025,
16 is amended to read as follows:

17 a. Each person who wishes to vote by absentee ballot at
18 the commissioner's office shall first sign an application for
19 a ballot including the following information: name, current
20 address, voter verification number, and the election for which
21 the ballot is requested. The person may report a change of
22 address or other information on the person's voter registration
23 record at that time. Prior to furnishing a ballot, the
24 commissioner shall verify the person's identity as provided in
25 section 49.78. The registered voter shall immediately mark the
26 ballot; enclose the ballot in a secrecy envelope, if necessary,
27 and seal it the ballot in the ~~envelope marked with the affidavit~~
28 ~~envelope~~; subscribe to the affidavit on the reverse side of
29 the envelope by signing and marking the registered voter's
30 voter verification number; and return the sealed affidavit
31 envelope containing the absentee ballot to the commissioner.
32 The commissioner shall record the numbers appearing on the
33 application and affidavit envelope along with the name of the
34 registered voter.

35 Sec. 20. Section 53.12, Code 2025, is amended by striking the

1 section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

2 **53.12 Duty of commissioner.**

3 The commissioner shall affix to the application the same
4 serial number that appears on the affidavit envelope, return
5 envelope, and delivery envelope.

6 Sec. 21. Section 53.16, Code 2025, is amended by striking the
7 section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

8 **53.16 Subscribing to affidavit.**

9 After marking the ballot, the voter shall enclose the ballot
10 in a secrecy envelope, if necessary, and seal the ballot in
11 the affidavit envelope; subscribe to the affidavit by signing
12 and marking the registered voter's voter verification number;
13 place the sealed affidavit envelope in the return envelope; and
14 securely seal the return envelope.

15 Sec. 22. Section 53.17, subsection 1, unnumbered paragraph 1,
16 Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

17 ~~If the commissioner mailed the ballot pursuant to section~~
18 ~~53.8, subsection 1, paragraph "a", subparagraph (1), the sealed~~
19 ~~envelope bearing the voter's affidavit and containing the~~
20 ~~absentee ballot shall be enclosed in a return envelope which~~
21 ~~shall be securely sealed. If the commissioner mailed the~~
22 ~~ballot pursuant to section 53.8, subsection 1, paragraph "a",~~
23 ~~subparagraph (2), the absentee ballot shall be enclosed in the~~
24 ~~return envelope which shall be securely sealed. The sealed~~
25 ~~return envelope shall be returned to the commissioner by one of~~
26 ~~the following methods:~~

27 Sec. 23. Section 53.17, subsection 1, paragraph a, Code 2025,
28 is amended to read as follows:

29 a. The sealed return envelope may be delivered by the
30 registered voter, by the voter's designee, or by the special
31 precinct election officials designated pursuant to section 53.22,
32 subsection 2, to the commissioner's office no later than ~~the time~~
33 ~~the polls are closed~~ 5:00 p.m. on the day before election day.
34 However, if delivered by the voter's designee, the envelope shall
35 be delivered within seventy-two hours of retrieving it from the

1 voter or by 5:00 p.m. on the day before the closing of the polls
2 ~~on~~ election day, whichever is earlier.

3 Sec. 24. Section 53.17, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code 2025,
4 is amended by striking the paragraph.

5 Sec. 25. Section 53.17, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
6 to read as follows:

7 2. In order for the ballot to be counted, the return envelope
8 must be received in the commissioner's office by 5:00 p.m. on
9 the day before the polls close on election day and recorded as
10 received by the commissioner by 11:59 p.m. on the day before
11 election day.

12 Sec. 26. Section 53.17, subsection 4, paragraph e, Code 2025,
13 is amended to read as follows:

14 e. A statement that the completed absentee ballot will be
15 delivered to the commissioner's office within seventy-two hours
16 of retrieving it from the voter or by the close of business
17 on the day before the closing of the polls on election day,
18 whichever is earlier.

19 Sec. 27. Section 53.17A, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code
20 2025, is amended to read as follows:

21 a. An absentee ballot received after the polls close of
22 business on the day before election day but prior to the official
23 canvass shall be counted if the commissioner determines that the
24 ballot entered the federal mail system by the deadline specified
25 in section 53.17 or 53.22. The date of entry of such an absentee
26 ballot into the federal mail system shall only be verified as
27 provided in paragraph "b".

28 Sec. 28. Section 53.18, subsections 2 and 3, Code 2025, are
29 amended to read as follows:

30 2. If the commissioner receives the return envelope
31 containing the completed absentee ballot by 5:00 p.m. on the
32 Saturday before the election for general elections and by 5:00
33 p.m. on the Friday before the election for all other elections,
34 the commissioner shall ~~review the affidavit marked on the return~~
35 ~~envelope, if applicable, for completeness or shall open the~~

1 ~~return envelope to review the affidavit for completeness open~~
2 the return envelope, if applicable, and review the affidavit
3 marked on the affidavit envelope for completeness. If the
4 affidavit lacks the signature or voter verification number of
5 the registered voter, the commissioner shall, within twenty-four
6 hours of the receipt of the envelope, notify the voter of the
7 deficiency and inform the voter that the voter may vote a
8 replacement ballot as provided in subsection 3, cast a ballot
9 as provided in section 53.19, subsection 3, or complete the
10 affidavit in person at the office of the commissioner not later
11 than the time polls close on election day.

12 3. If the affidavit envelope ~~or the return envelope marked~~
13 ~~with the affidavit~~ contains a defect that would cause the
14 absentee ballot to be rejected by the absentee and special
15 voters precinct board, the commissioner shall immediately notify
16 the voter of that fact and that the voter's absentee ballot
17 shall not be counted unless the voter requests and returns a
18 replacement ballot in the time permitted under section 53.17,
19 subsection 2. For the purposes of this section, ~~a return an~~
20 affidavit envelope marked with the affidavit shall be considered
21 to contain a defect if ~~it appears to the commissioner that~~
22 ~~the signature on the envelope has been signed by someone other~~
23 ~~than the registered voter, in comparing the signature on the~~
24 ~~envelope to the signature on record of the registered voter named~~
25 ~~on the envelope. A signature or marking made in accordance~~
26 ~~with section 39.3, subsection 17, shall not be considered a~~
27 ~~defect for purposes of this section~~ the voter verification number
28 provided does not match the voter verification number associated
29 with the voter's voter registration. The voter may request a
30 replacement ballot in person, in writing, or over the telephone.
31 The same serial number that was assigned to the records of
32 the original absentee ballot application shall be used on the
33 envelope envelopes and records of the replacement ballot. The
34 affidavit envelope marked with the affidavit and containing
35 the completed replacement ballot shall be marked "Replacement

1 ballot". The affidavit envelope ~~marked with the affidavit and~~
2 containing the original ballot shall be marked "Defective" and
3 ~~the "Defective".~~ The replacement ballot shall be attached to
4 ~~such~~ the affidavit envelope containing the original ballot and
5 shall be stored in a secure place until they are delivered to
6 the absentee and special voters precinct board, notwithstanding
7 sections 53.26 and 53.27.

8 Sec. 29. Section 53.19, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended
9 to read as follows:

10 1. The commissioner shall maintain a list of the absentee
11 ballots provided to registered voters, the serial number
12 appearing on the unsealed envelope, the date the application for
13 the absentee ballot was received, the date the absentee ballot
14 was sent to the registered voter requesting the absentee ballot,
15 the date the absentee ballot was received by the commissioner,
16 the date the absentee ballot outer envelope was opened, and
17 whether the ballot was delivered by mail, or in person, ~~to a~~
18 ~~ballot drop box~~, or cast in person at a satellite location. The
19 information under this subsection shall be reported separately at
20 the same time as the information reported under section 53.30,
21 subsection 3.

22 Sec. 30. Section 53.21, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code 2025,
23 is amended to read as follows:

24 b. The voter shall enclose one copy of the above statement
25 in the return envelope along with the affidavit envelope, ~~if the~~
26 ~~voter was mailed a separate affidavit envelope~~, and shall retain
27 a copy for the voter's records.

28 Sec. 31. Section 53.23, subsection 3, paragraph b,
29 subparagraph (1), Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

30 (1) The commissioner may direct the board to meet on the day
31 before the election for the purpose of reviewing the absentee
32 voters' affidavits appearing on the sealed envelopes. If in the
33 commissioner's judgment this procedure is necessary due to the
34 number of absentee ballots received, the members of the board
35 may open the sealed affidavit envelopes and remove the secrecy

1 envelope containing the ballot, but under no circumstances shall
2 a secrecy envelope or a ~~return~~ an affidavit envelope marked with
3 ~~an affidavit~~ be opened before the board convenes on election day,
4 except as provided in paragraph "c". If the affidavit envelopes
5 are opened before election day pursuant to this paragraph "b",
6 the observers appointed by each political party, as defined in
7 section 43.2, shall witness the proceedings. Each political
8 party may appoint up to five observers under this paragraph "b".
9 The observers shall be appointed by the county chairperson or, if
10 the county chairperson fails to make an appointment, by the state
11 chairperson. However, if either or both political parties fail
12 to appoint an observer, the commissioner may continue with the
13 proceedings.

14 Sec. 32. Section 53.23, subsection 5, Code 2025, is amended
15 to read as follows:

16 5. The special precinct election board shall preserve the
17 secrecy of all absentee and provisional ballots. After the
18 affidavits on the affidavit envelopes have been reviewed and
19 the qualifications of the persons casting the ballots have been
20 determined, those that have been accepted for counting shall
21 be opened. The ballots shall be removed from the affidavit
22 envelopes ~~or return envelopes marked with the affidavit, as~~
23 ~~applicable,~~ without being unfolded or examined, and then shall
24 be thoroughly intermingled, after which they shall be unfolded
25 and tabulated. If secrecy ~~folders~~ or envelopes are used with
26 provisional paper ballots, the ballots shall be removed from
27 the secrecy ~~folders~~ envelopes after the ballots have been
28 intermingled.

29 Sec. 33. Section 53.25, subsection 1, paragraph a, Code 2025,
30 is amended to read as follows:

31 a. If the absentee voter's affidavit lacks the voter's
32 signature or voter verification number, if the applicant is not
33 a duly registered voter on election day in the precinct where the
34 absentee ballot was cast, if the affidavit envelope ~~marked with~~
35 ~~the affidavit~~ contains more than one ballot of any one kind, or

1 if the voter has voted in person, such vote shall be rejected by
2 the absentee and special voters precinct board. If the affidavit
3 envelope ~~or return envelope marked with the affidavit~~ is open, or
4 has been opened and resealed, or if the ballot is not enclosed in
5 ~~such~~ the affidavit envelope, and an affidavit envelope or return
6 envelope marked with the affidavit with the same serial number
7 and marked "Replacement ballot" is not attached as provided in
8 section 53.18, the ballot shall be rejected by the absentee and
9 special voters precinct board.

10 Sec. 34. Section 53.25, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
11 to read as follows:

12 2. If the absentee or provisional ballot is rejected prior
13 to the opening of the affidavit envelope ~~or return envelope~~
14 ~~marked with the affidavit~~, the voter casting the ballot shall be
15 notified by a precinct election official by the time the canvass
16 is completed of the reason for the rejection on a form prescribed
17 by the state commissioner of elections.

18 Sec. 35. Section 53.30, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
19 to read as follows:

20 2. At the conclusion of each meeting of the absentee and
21 special voters precinct board, the board shall securely seal
22 all ballots counted by them in the manner prescribed in section
23 50.12. The ballot envelopes, including the affidavit envelope
24 ~~if an affidavit envelope was provided~~, the return envelope, and
25 secrecy envelope bearing the signatures of precinct election
26 officials, as required by section 53.23, shall be preserved. All
27 applications for absentee ballots, ballots rejected without being
28 opened, absentee ballot logs, and any other documents pertaining
29 to the absentee ballot process shall be preserved until such time
30 as the documents may be destroyed pursuant to section 50.19.

31 Sec. 36. Section 53.32, Code 2025, is amended to read as
32 follows:

33 **53.32 Ballot of deceased voter.**

34 When it shall be made to appear by due proof to the precinct
35 election officials that any elector, who has so marked and

1 forwarded a ballot, has died before the ~~envelope marked with the~~
2 affidavit envelope is opened, then the ballot of such deceased
3 voter shall be endorsed, "Rejected because voter is dead", and
4 be returned to the commissioner. The casting of the ballot of a
5 deceased voter shall not invalidate the election.

6 Sec. 37. Section 53.33, subsection 7, paragraph a, Code 2025,
7 is amended to read as follows:

8 a. Deliver the completed absentee ballot in person to the
9 commissioner's office. The delivery agent shall not deliver the
10 completed absentee ballot by mail ~~or to a ballot drop box~~.

11 Sec. 38. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act takes
12 effect January 1, 2026.

13 DIVISION V

14 PERSONS PERMITTED IN VOTING BOOTHS

15 Sec. 39. Section 49.88, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended
16 to read as follows:

17 3. A person standing for election on the ballot before a
18 voter ~~shall not occupy~~ commits a violation of this section by
19 occupying the voting booth with the voter, including to assist
20 the voter.

21 Sec. 40. Section 49.90, Code 2025, is amended to read as
22 follows:

23 **49.90 Assisting voter.**

24 1. Any voter who may declare upon oath that the voter is
25 blind, cannot read the English language, or is, by reason of
26 any physical disability other than intoxication, unable to cast
27 a vote without assistance, shall, upon request, be assisted by
28 the two officers as provided in section 49.89, or alternatively
29 by any other person the voter may select in casting the vote,
30 except that the voter shall not select a person standing for
31 election on the ballot. The officers, or the person selected by
32 the voter, shall cast the vote of the voter requiring assistance,
33 and shall thereafter give no information regarding the vote cast.
34 If any elector because of a disability cannot enter the building
35 where the polling place for the elector's precinct of residence

1 is located, the two officers shall take a paper ballot to the
2 vehicle occupied by the elector with a disability and allow the
3 elector to cast the ballot in the vehicle. Ballots cast by
4 voters with disabilities shall be deposited in the regular ballot
5 box, or inserted in the tabulating device, and counted in the
6 usual manner.

7 2. A person standing for election on the ballot before a
8 voter commits a violation of section 49.88 by occupying the
9 voting booth with the voter.

10 Sec. 41. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act takes
11 effect January 1, 2026.

12 DIVISION VI

13 VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE PILOT PROGRAM

14 Sec. 42. NEW SECTION. **47.7A Statewide voter registration**
15 **database verification pilot program.**

16 1. A statewide voter registration database verification pilot
17 program is established within the office of the state registrar
18 as follows:

19 a. The state registrar shall contract with a third-party
20 vendor to develop or provide a program to allow the state
21 registrar to verify the status of records in the statewide voter
22 registration file and identify ineligible voters on an ongoing
23 basis.

24 b. During the first quarter of the calendar year 2026, the
25 state registrar shall utilize the program developed or provided
26 by the third-party vendor to verify the status of records in the
27 statewide voter registration file. The state registrar shall
28 forward the results of the analysis to each county commissioner
29 of registration prior to the date reports are required to be
30 submitted pursuant to section 48A.40.

31 c. The state registrar shall evaluate the efficacy and cost
32 of the pilot program as compared to the current method of
33 verifying the list of voters in the statewide voter registration
34 file.

35 2. This section is repealed December 31, 2028.

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DIVISION VII

COUNTY HOSPITAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sec. 43. Section 347.9, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended by striking the subsection.

Sec. 44. TRANSITION. This division of this Act does not alter the term of office of a trustee elected to a county public hospital board of trustees prior to the effective date of this division of this Act.

Sec. 45. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act takes effect January 1, 2026.

EXPLANATION

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

This bill relates to duties of the secretary of state, including the address confidentiality program and the conduct of elections. The bill is organized in divisions.

DIVISION I — ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM. This division relates to the address confidentiality program, which provides mail forwarding services to persons who are victims of domestic abuse, domestic abuse assault, sexual abuse, assault, stalking, or human trafficking, or who fear for their own safety or the safety of a household member. The bill allows the secretary of state to accept as a program participant's mailing address the name and other contact information of a shelter in lieu of the shelter's physical address, to cancel a deceased participant's certification, and to hold a participant's mail for up to 30 days at the request of the participant.

This division takes effect upon enactment.

DIVISION II — CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY OBJECTIONS. This division relates to the nomination of candidates for federal office. The bill exempts candidates for federal office from the requirement that a candidate sign a statement that the candidate is aware that the candidate is disqualified from holding office if the candidate has been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime and the candidate's rights have not been restored by the governor

1 or by the president of the United States. The bill limits
2 objections to the eligibility of a candidate for a federal office
3 that may be filed with the state commissioner of elections to
4 objections to the legal sufficiency of the nomination petition or
5 certificate of election, or to the residency, age, or citizenship
6 requirements as described in the United States Constitution.
7 With respect to nominations for president or vice president of
8 the United States, the bill allows objections only to the legal
9 sufficiency of the certificate of nomination. The certificate of
10 nomination shall be presumed valid.

11 This division takes effect upon enactment.

12 DIVISION III — RANKED CHOICE VOTING. This division relates
13 to the use of ranked choice and instant runoff voting for
14 elections in this state. The bill prohibits ranked choice and
15 instant runoff voting, defined in the bill as a system in which
16 voters rank multiple candidates for a single office in order of
17 preference and candidates are eliminated and votes transferred
18 between candidates in a series of rounds, from being used to cast
19 or tabulate ballots in any election in this state.

20 This division takes effect January 1, 2026.

21 DIVISION IV — ABSENT VOTERS. This division relates to the
22 casting of ballots by absent voters. The bill strikes provisions
23 allowing a county commissioner of elections to establish drop
24 boxes to which a person can return an absentee ballot.

25 The bill requires an absentee ballot that is mailed to a voter
26 to be enclosed in an unsealed affidavit envelope and with or in
27 an unsealed return envelope, which shall then be enclosed in the
28 delivery envelope. If the ballot cannot be folded so that all
29 the votes on the ballot will be hidden, the bill requires the
30 commissioner to also send a secrecy envelope. The bill requires
31 a registered voter to subscribe to an affidavit on an affidavit
32 envelope by signing the envelope and writing the voter's voter
33 verification number. The bill also requires return envelopes to
34 have printed on them the deadline to return the ballot and the
35 manner to track the status of the ballot.

1 The bill strikes a requirement that an affidavit envelope
2 be considered to contain a defect if it appears to the county
3 commissioner of elections that it was signed by a person
4 other than the voter. The bill adds a requirement that an
5 affidavit envelope be considered to contain a defect if the voter
6 verification number on the envelope does not match the voter
7 verification number on file for the voter.

8 The bill strikes certain requirements regarding what materials
9 a commissioner shall include with an absentee ballot and instead
10 requires a commissioner to put the same serial number on the
11 affidavit, return, and delivery envelopes. The bill requires all
12 mailed absentee ballots to include an affidavit envelope. The
13 bill also requires the absentee and special voters precinct board
14 to reject an absentee ballot if the affidavit envelope does not
15 include the voter's voter verification number.

16 The bill changes the timeline for the mailing and return of
17 absentee ballots. The bill allows a county commissioner of
18 elections to mail absentee ballots to voters beginning 22 days
19 before an election and requires absentee ballots to be delivered
20 to the office of the county commissioner of elections by 5:00
21 p.m. on the day before election day. The bill also requires the
22 county commissioner of elections to record the ballot as received
23 by 11:59 p.m. on the day before the election. Under current
24 law, county commissioners of elections may mail absentee ballots
25 beginning 20 days before an election and absentee ballots must be
26 delivered to the office of the county commissioner of elections
27 not later than the time polls close on election day.

28 This division takes effect January 1, 2026.

29 DIVISION V — PERSONS PERMITTED IN VOTING BOOTHS. This
30 division amends the subsection of Code section 49.88 (limitation
31 on persons in booth and time for voting) prohibiting a person
32 standing for election on the ballot before a voter from occupying
33 the voting booth with the voter and Code section 49.90 (assisting
34 voter) to say that the candidate violates Code section 49.88 by
35 occupying the voting booth with the voter.

1 This division takes effect January 1, 2026.

2 DIVISION VI — VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE PILOT PROGRAM. This
3 division requires the state registrar of voters to contract with
4 a third-party vendor to develop or provide a program to allow
5 the state registrar to verify the status of records in the
6 statewide voter registration file and identify ineligible voters
7 on an ongoing basis. During the first quarter of 2026, the bill
8 requires the state registrar of voters to utilize the program
9 developed or provided by the third-party vendor to verify the
10 status of records in the statewide voter registration file. The
11 state registrar shall forward the results of the analysis to each
12 county commissioner of registration prior to the date that county
13 commissioners of registration are required to submit voter list
14 maintenance reports. The bill requires the state registrar of
15 voters to evaluate the efficacy and cost of the pilot program as
16 compared to the current method of maintaining the statewide voter
17 registration database. The pilot program is repealed effective
18 December 31, 2028.

19 DIVISION VII — COUNTY HOSPITAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES. This
20 division strikes a provision setting the term length for persons
21 elected to a county hospital board of trustees in a county with
22 a population of at least 400,000 to six years, returning the
23 term length to four years. The bill does not affect the term
24 of office of a trustee elected to a county public hospital board
25 of trustees prior to January 1, 2026.

26 This division takes effect January 1, 2026.