

Senate File 94 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 94
BY SALMON

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

unofficial

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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.

DIVISION II

CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY OBJECTIONS

Sec. 4. Section 43.18, subsection 9, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

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

7 Sec. 5. Section 43.24, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended by
8 adding the following new paragraph:

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

15 Sec. 6. Section 44.3, subsection 2, paragraph i, Code 2025,
16 is amended to read as follows:

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

23 Sec. 7. Section 44.6, Code 2025, is amended to read as
24 follows:

25 **44.6 Hearing before state commissioner.**

26 Objections filed with the state commissioner shall be
27 considered by the secretary of state and auditor of state
28 and attorney general, and a majority decision shall be final.
29 However, if the objection is to the certificate of nomination of
30 one or more of the above named officers, the officer or officers
31 objected to shall not pass upon the objection, but their places
32 shall be filled, respectively, by the treasurer of state, the
33 governor, and the secretary of agriculture. Objections relating
34 to incorrect or incomplete information for information that is
35 required under section 44.3 shall be sustained. Objections

1 to the eligibility of a candidate for a federal office shall
2 not be sustained unless the objection is limited to the
3 legal sufficiency of the nomination petition or certificate of
4 nomination, or to the residency, age, or citizenship requirements
5 as described in the Constitution of the United States.

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

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

14 Sec. 9. Section 54.5, Code 2025, is amended by adding the
15 following new subsection:

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

20 DIVISION III

21 RANKED CHOICE VOTING

22 Sec. 10. Section 49.93, Code 2025, is amended to read as
23 follows:

24 **49.93 Number of votes for each office.**

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

32 2. a. An election in this state shall not be conducted using
33 ranked choice voting or instant runoff voting.

34 b. For the purposes of this section, "ranked choice voting"
35 or "instant runoff voting" means a method of casting and

1 tabulating votes in which a voter ranks candidates in order of
2 preference, tabulation of ballots proceeds in rounds such that
3 in each round either a candidate is elected or the candidate
4 receiving the fewest votes is defeated, votes are transferred
5 from elected or defeated candidates to a voter's next-ranked
6 candidate in order of preference, and tabulation ends when a
7 candidate receives the majority of votes cast or the number of
8 candidates elected equals the number of offices to be filled, as
9 applicable.

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DIVISION IV

11

ABSENT VOTERS

12 Sec. 11. Section 39A.4, subsection 1, paragraph c,
13 subparagraphs (10) and (11), Code 2025, are amended to read as
14 follows:

15 (10) Returning a voted absentee ballot by mail, ~~to a ballot~~
16 ~~drop box~~, or in person, to the commissioner's office and the
17 person returning the ballot is a person prohibited to collect and
18 deliver a completed ballot pursuant to section 53.33.

19 (11) Making a false or untrue statement reporting that a
20 voted absentee ballot was returned to the commissioner's office,
21 by mail or in person, ~~or to a ballot drop box~~, by a person
22 prohibited to collect and deliver a completed ballot pursuant to
23 section 53.33.

24 Sec. 12. NEW SECTION. 53.1B Definitions.

25 For purposes of this subchapter, unless the context otherwise
26 requires:

27 1. "Affidavit envelope" means an envelope that includes
28 a serial number and bears on the back an affidavit for a
29 registered voter to mark the registered voter's signature and
30 voter verification number in a form prescribed by the state
31 commissioner.

32 2. "Delivery envelope" means an envelope that bears on its
33 face the name and address of the registered voter requesting an
34 absentee ballot, the words "county commissioner of elections",
35 the address of the commissioner's office, and the same serial

1 number that appears on the affidavit envelope and return
2 envelope.

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

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

10 Sec. 13. Section 53.4, subsection 1, paragraph c,
11 subparagraph (2), Code 2025, is amended by striking the
12 subparagraph.

13 Sec. 14. Section 53.8, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended to
14 read as follows:

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

29 ~~(1) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed~~
30 ~~envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit. The absentee~~
31 ~~ballot and affidavit envelope shall be enclosed in or with an~~
32 ~~unsealed return envelope marked postage paid which bears the same~~
33 ~~serial number as the affidavit envelope. The absentee ballot,~~
34 ~~affidavit envelope, and return envelope shall be enclosed in a~~
35 ~~third envelope to be sent to the registered voter. If the ballot~~

1 cannot be folded so that all of the votes cast on the ballot will
2 be hidden, the commissioner shall also enclose a secrecy envelope
3 with the absentee ballot.

4 (2) The absentee ballot shall be enclosed in an unsealed
5 return envelope marked with a serial number and affidavit and
6 marked postage paid. The absentee ballot and return envelope
7 shall be enclosed in a second envelope to be sent to the
8 registered voter. If the ballot cannot be folded so that all
9 of the votes cast on the ballot will be hidden, the commissioner
10 shall also enclose a secrecy envelope with the absentee ballot.

11 b. The affidavit shall be marked on the appropriate envelope
12 in a form prescribed by the state commissioner of elections
13 registered voter requesting and receiving an absentee ballot
14 shall subscribe to the affidavit by signing and marking the
15 registered voter's voter verification number on the affidavit
16 envelope.

17 c. All domestic return envelope flaps or backs shall also be
18 printed or stamped with a notice of the deadline to return a
19 completed absentee ballot and the manner to track the status of
20 the ballot in a form prescribed by the state commissioner.

21 e. d. For envelopes mailed at any election other than the
22 primary election, the commissioner shall not mark any envelope
23 with any information related to the party affiliation of the
24 applicant.

25 Sec. 15. Section 53.8, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code 2025,
26 is amended to read as follows:

27 a. The commissioner shall enclose with the absentee ballot
28 a statement informing the applicant that the sealed return
29 envelope may be mailed to the commissioner by the registered
30 voter or a person not prohibited to collect and deliver a
31 completed ballot pursuant to section 53.33, ~~may be returned to~~
32 ~~a drop box established by the commissioner pursuant to section~~
33 ~~53.17, subsection 1, by the registered voter or a person not~~
34 ~~prohibited to collect and deliver a completed ballot pursuant to~~
35 ~~section 53.33, only if the commissioner has established such a~~

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

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

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

29 Sec. 17. Section 53.12, Code 2025, is amended by striking the
30 section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

31 **53.12 Duty of commissioner.**

32 The commissioner shall affix to the application the same
33 serial number that appears on the affidavit envelope, return
34 envelope, and delivery envelope.

35 Sec. 18. Section 53.16, Code 2025, is amended by striking the

1 section and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

2 **53.16 Subscribing to affidavit.**

3 After marking the ballot, the voter shall enclose the ballot
4 in a secrecy envelope, if necessary, and seal the ballot in
5 the affidavit envelope; subscribe to the affidavit by signing
6 and marking the registered voter's voter verification number;
7 place the sealed affidavit envelope in the return envelope; and
8 securely seal the return envelope.

9 Sec. 19. Section 53.17, subsection 1, unnumbered paragraph 1,
10 Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

11 ~~If the commissioner mailed the ballot pursuant to section~~
12 ~~53.8, subsection 1, paragraph "a", subparagraph (1), the sealed~~
13 ~~envelope bearing the voter's affidavit and containing the~~
14 ~~absentee ballot shall be enclosed in a return envelope which~~
15 ~~shall be securely sealed. If the commissioner mailed the~~
16 ~~ballot pursuant to section 53.8, subsection 1, paragraph "a",~~
17 ~~subparagraph (2), the absentee ballot shall be enclosed in the~~
18 ~~return envelope which shall be securely sealed. The sealed~~
19 ~~return envelope shall be returned to the commissioner by one of~~
20 ~~the following methods:~~

21 Sec. 20. Section 53.17, subsection 1, paragraph a, Code 2025,
22 is amended to read as follows:

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

32 Sec. 21. Section 53.17, subsection 1, paragraph c, Code 2025,
33 is amended by striking the paragraph.

34 Sec. 22. Section 53.17, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
35 to read as follows:

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

6 Sec. 23. Section 53.17, subsection 4, paragraph e, Code 2025,
7 is amended to read as follows:

8 e. A statement that the completed absentee ballot will be
9 delivered to the commissioner's office within seventy-two hours
10 of retrieving it from the voter or ~~before the closing by the~~
11 close of business on the polls on day before election day,
12 whichever is earlier.

13 Sec. 24. Section 53.17A, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code
14 2025, is amended to read as follows:

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

22 Sec. 25. Section 53.18, subsections 2 and 3, Code 2025, are
23 amended to read as follows:

24 2. If the commissioner receives the return envelope
25 containing the completed absentee ballot by 5:00 p.m. on the
26 Saturday before the election for general elections and by 5:00
27 p.m. on the Friday before the election for all other elections,
28 the commissioner shall ~~review the affidavit marked on the return~~
29 ~~envelope, if applicable, for completeness or shall open the~~
30 ~~return envelope to review the affidavit for completeness~~ open
31 the return envelope, if applicable, and review the affidavit
32 marked on the affidavit envelope for completeness. If the
33 affidavit lacks the signature or voter verification number of
34 the registered voter, the commissioner shall, within twenty-four
35 hours of the receipt of the envelope, notify the voter of the

1 deficiency and inform the voter that the voter may vote a
2 replacement ballot as provided in subsection 3, cast a ballot
3 as provided in section 53.19, subsection 3, or complete the
4 affidavit in person at the office of the commissioner not later
5 than the time polls close on election day.

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

1 sections 53.26 and 53.27.

2 Sec. 26. Section 53.19, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended
3 to read as follows:

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

16 Sec. 27. Section 53.21, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code 2025,
17 is amended to read as follows:

18 b. The voter shall enclose one copy of the above statement
19 in the return envelope along with the affidavit envelope, ~~if the~~
20 ~~voter was mailed a separate affidavit envelope~~, and shall retain
21 a copy for the voter's records.

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

24 (1) The commissioner may direct the board to meet on the day
25 before the election for the purpose of reviewing the absentee
26 voters' affidavits appearing on the sealed envelopes. If in the
27 commissioner's judgment this procedure is necessary due to the
28 number of absentee ballots received, the members of the board
29 may open the sealed affidavit envelopes and remove the secrecy
30 envelope containing the ballot, but under no circumstances shall
31 a secrecy envelope or ~~a return an affidavit envelope marked with~~
32 ~~an affidavit~~ be opened before the board convenes on election day,
33 except as provided in paragraph "c". If the affidavit envelopes
34 are opened before election day pursuant to this paragraph "b",
35 the observers appointed by each political party, as defined in

1 section 43.2, shall witness the proceedings. Each political
2 party may appoint up to five observers under this paragraph "b".
3 The observers shall be appointed by the county chairperson or, if
4 the county chairperson fails to make an appointment, by the state
5 chairperson. However, if either or both political parties fail
6 to appoint an observer, the commissioner may continue with the
7 proceedings.

8 Sec. 29. Section 53.23, subsection 5, Code 2025, is amended
9 to read as follows:

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

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

25 a. If the absentee voter's affidavit lacks the voter's
26 signature or voter verification number, if the applicant is not
27 a duly registered voter on election day in the precinct where the
28 absentee ballot was cast, if the affidavit envelope ~~marked with~~
29 ~~the affidavit~~ contains more than one ballot of any one kind, or
30 if the voter has voted in person, such vote shall be rejected by
31 the absentee and special voters precinct board. If the affidavit
32 envelope ~~or return envelope marked with the affidavit~~ is open, or
33 has been opened and resealed, or if the ballot is not enclosed in
34 ~~such~~ the affidavit envelope, and an affidavit envelope or return
35 envelope marked with the affidavit with the same serial number

1 and marked "Replacement ballot" is not attached as provided in
2 section 53.18, the ballot shall be rejected by the absentee and
3 special voters precinct board.

4 Sec. 31. Section 53.25, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
5 to read as follows:

6 2. If the absentee or provisional ballot is rejected prior
7 to the opening of the affidavit envelope ~~or return envelope~~
8 ~~marked with the affidavit~~, the voter casting the ballot shall be
9 notified by a precinct election official by the time the canvass
10 is completed of the reason for the rejection on a form prescribed
11 by the state commissioner of elections.

12 Sec. 32. Section 53.30, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
13 to read as follows:

14 2. At the conclusion of each meeting of the absentee and
15 special voters precinct board, the board shall securely seal
16 all ballots counted by them in the manner prescribed in section
17 50.12. The ballot envelopes, including the affidavit envelope
18 ~~if an affidavit envelope was provided~~, the return envelope, and
19 secrecy envelope bearing the signatures of precinct election
20 officials, as required by section 53.23, shall be preserved. All
21 applications for absentee ballots, ballots rejected without being
22 opened, absentee ballot logs, and any other documents pertaining
23 to the absentee ballot process shall be preserved until such time
24 as the documents may be destroyed pursuant to section 50.19.

25 Sec. 33. Section 53.32, Code 2025, is amended to read as
26 follows:

27 **53.32 Ballot of deceased voter.**

28 When it shall be made to appear by due proof to the precinct
29 election officials that any elector, who has so marked and
30 forwarded a ballot, has died before the ~~envelope marked with~~
31 ~~the affidavit~~ affidavit envelope is opened, then the ballot of
32 such deceased voter shall be endorsed, "Rejected because voter is
33 dead", and be returned to the commissioner. The casting of the
34 ballot of a deceased voter shall not invalidate the election.

35 Sec. 34. Section 53.33, subsection 7, paragraph a, Code 2025,

1 is amended to read as follows:

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

5

DIVISION V

6

PERSONS PERMITTED IN VOTING BOOTHS

7 Sec. 35. Section 49.88, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended
8 to read as follows:

9 3. A person standing for election on the ballot before a
10 voter ~~shall not occupy~~ commits a violation of this section by
11 occupying the voting booth with the voter, including to assist
12 the voter.

13 Sec. 36. Section 49.90, Code 2025, is amended to read as
14 follows:

15 **49.90 Assisting voter.**

16 1. Any voter who may declare upon oath that the voter is
17 blind, cannot read the English language, or is, by reason of
18 any physical disability other than intoxication, unable to cast
19 a vote without assistance, shall, upon request, be assisted by
20 the two officers as provided in section 49.89, or alternatively
21 by any other person the voter may select in casting the vote,
22 except that the voter shall not select a person standing for
23 election on the ballot. The officers, or the person selected by
24 the voter, shall cast the vote of the voter requiring assistance,
25 and shall thereafter give no information regarding the vote cast.
26 If any elector because of a disability cannot enter the building
27 where the polling place for the elector's precinct of residence
28 is located, the two officers shall take a paper ballot to the
29 vehicle occupied by the elector with a disability and allow the
30 elector to cast the ballot in the vehicle. Ballots cast by
31 voters with disabilities shall be deposited in the regular ballot
32 box, or inserted in the tabulating device, and counted in the
33 usual manner.

34 2. A person standing for election on the ballot before a
35 voter commits a violation of section 49.88 by occupying the

1 voting booth with the voter.

2 DIVISION VI

3 VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE PILOT PROGRAM

4 Sec. 37. NEW SECTION. **47.7A Statewide voter registration**
5 **database verification pilot program.**

6 1. A statewide voter registration database verification pilot
7 program is established within the office of the state registrar
8 as follows:

9 a. The state registrar shall contract with a third-party
10 vendor to develop or provide a program to allow the state
11 registrar to verify the status of records in the statewide voter
12 registration file and identify ineligible voters on an ongoing
13 basis.

14 b. During the first quarter of the calendar year 2026, the
15 state registrar shall utilize the program developed or provided
16 by the third-party vendor to verify the status of records in the
17 statewide voter registration file. The state registrar shall
18 forward the results of the analysis to each county commissioner
19 of registration prior to the date reports are required to be
20 submitted pursuant to section 48A.40.

21 c. The state registrar shall evaluate the efficacy and cost
22 of the pilot program as compared to the current method of
23 verifying the list of voters in the statewide voter registration
24 file.

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

26 DIVISION VII

27 COUNTY HOSPITAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

28 Sec. 38. Section 347.9, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended
29 by striking the subsection.

30 Sec. 39. TRANSITION. This division of this Act does not
31 alter the term of office of a trustee elected to a county public
32 hospital board of trustees prior to the effective date of this
33 division of this Act.

34 EXPLANATION

35 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with

1 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

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

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

16 DIVISION II — CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY OBJECTIONS. This division
17 relates to the nomination of candidates for federal office. The
18 bill exempts candidates for federal office from the requirement
19 that a candidate sign a statement that the candidate is aware
20 that the candidate is disqualified from holding office if the
21 candidate has been convicted of a felony or other infamous crime
22 and the candidate's rights have not been restored by the governor
23 or by the president of the United States. The bill limits
24 objections to the eligibility of a candidate for a federal office
25 that may be filed with the state commissioner of elections to
26 objections to the legal sufficiency of the nomination petition or
27 certificate of election, or to the residency, age, or citizenship
28 requirements as described in the United States Constitution.
29 With respect to nominations for president or vice president of
30 the United States, the bill allows objections only to the legal
31 sufficiency of the certificate of nomination. The certificate of
32 nomination shall be presumed valid.

33 DIVISION III — RANKED CHOICE VOTING. This division relates
34 to the use of ranked choice and instant runoff voting for
35 elections in this state. The bill prohibits ranked choice and

1 instant runoff voting, defined in the bill as a system in which
2 voters rank multiple candidates for a single office in order of
3 preference and candidates are eliminated and votes transferred
4 between candidates in a series of rounds, from being used to cast
5 or tabulate ballots in any election in this state.

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

10 The bill requires an absentee ballot that is mailed to a voter
11 to be enclosed in an unsealed affidavit envelope and with or in
12 an unsealed return envelope, which shall then be enclosed in the
13 delivery envelope. If the ballot cannot be folded so that all
14 the votes on the ballot will be hidden, the bill requires the
15 commissioner to also send a secrecy envelope. The bill requires
16 a registered voter to subscribe to an affidavit on an affidavit
17 envelope by signing the envelope and writing the voter's voter
18 verification number. The bill also requires return envelopes to
19 have printed on them the deadline to return the ballot and the
20 manner to track the status of the ballot.

21 The bill strikes a requirement that an affidavit envelope
22 be considered to contain a defect if it appears to the county
23 commissioner of elections that it was signed by a person
24 other than the voter. The bill adds a requirement that an
25 affidavit envelope be considered to contain a defect if the voter
26 verification number on the envelope does not match the voter
27 verification number on file for the voter.

28 The bill repeals certain requirements regarding what materials
29 a commissioner shall include with an absentee ballot and instead
30 requires a commissioner to put the same serial number on the
31 affidavit, return, and delivery envelopes. The bill requires all
32 mailed absentee ballots to include an affidavit envelope. The
33 bill also requires the absentee and special voters precinct board
34 to reject an absentee ballot if the affidavit envelope does not
35 include the voter's voter verification number.

1 The bill changes the timeline for the mailing and return of
2 absentee ballots. The bill allows a county commissioner of
3 elections to mail absentee ballots to voters beginning 22 days
4 before an election and requires absentee ballots to be delivered
5 to the office of the county commissioner of elections by 5:00
6 p.m. on the day before election day. The bill also requires the
7 county commissioner of elections to record the ballot as received
8 by 11:59 p.m. on the day before the election. Under current
9 law, county commissioners of elections may mail absentee ballots
10 beginning 20 days before an election and absentee ballots must be
11 delivered to the office of the county commissioner of elections
12 not later than the time polls close on election day.

13 DIVISION V — PERSONS PERMITTED IN VOTING BOOTHS. This
14 division amends the subsection of Code section 49.88 (limitation
15 on persons in booth and time for voting) prohibiting a person
16 standing for election on the ballot before a voter from occupying
17 the voting booth with the voter and Code section 49.90 (assisting
18 voter) to say that the candidate violates Code section 49.88 by
19 occupying the voting booth with the voter.

20 DIVISION VI — VOTER REGISTRATION DATABASE PILOT PROGRAM. This
21 division requires the state registrar of voters to contract with
22 a third-party vendor to develop or provide a program to allow
23 the state registrar to verify the status of records in the
24 statewide voter registration file and identify ineligible voters
25 on an ongoing basis. During the first quarter of 2026, the bill
26 requires the state registrar of voters to utilize the program
27 developed or provided by the third-party vendor to verify the
28 status of records in the statewide voter registration file. The
29 state registrar shall forward the results of the analysis to each
30 county commissioner of registration prior to the date that county
31 commissioners of registration are required to submit voter list
32 maintenance reports. The bill requires the state registrar of
33 voters to evaluate the efficacy and cost of the pilot program as
34 compared to the current method of maintaining the statewide voter
35 registration database. The pilot program is repealed effective

1 December 31, 2028.

2 DIVISION VII — COUNTY HOSPITAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES. This
3 division strikes a provision setting the term length for persons
4 elected to a county hospital board of trustees in a county with
5 a population of at least 400,000 to six years, returning the
6 term length to four years. The bill does not affect the term
7 of office of a trustee elected to a county public hospital board
8 of trustees prior to July 1, 2025.

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