

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Proof of citizenship and photo identification for voters

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Overview

The bill (1) requires most voters to provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote before or on election day and (2) requires most registered voters to provide picture identification when voting. It creates an "unverified ballot" to be cast by those who lack photo identification. It also requires the Department of Public Safety to provide a Minnesota identification card or Under-21 identification card to any eligible voter who certifies a household income below the federal poverty level and demonstrates need.

Section

- 1** **Prior to election day.** Amends the statute on registering to vote before election day. Requires an individual to provide proof of citizenship in the form of a birth certification, naturalization papers, or a passport. Requires a "state certified" copy of one of these documents for individuals registering by mail. Exempts from this provision: individuals who live in homeless shelters, domestic abuse shelters, nursing homes, and other licensed facilities listed in current election law.
- 2** **Election day registration.** Amends the statute on election day registration. Requires an individual to provide proof of citizenship in the form of a birth certification, naturalization papers, or a passport. Exempts from this provision: individuals who live in homeless shelters, domestic abuse shelters, nursing homes, and other licensed facilities listed in current election law.
- 3** **Permanent registration.** Requires previously registered voters to provide picture identification before voting, unless a voter resides in a homeless shelter, domestic abuse

Section

shelter, nursing home, or other licensed facility listed in current election law.

- 4** **No charge for certain identification.** Requires the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to provide a Minnesota identification card or Under-21 identification card to any eligible voter who certifies a household income below the federal poverty level and demonstrates need. Allows applying for this card only at one of 16 regional state-run driver license facilities. Requires the applicant to provide verification of eligibility.

Requires the Secretary of State to reimburse DPS for the actual cost of these cards; requires the two offices to (1) agree on costs and procedures before implementing this section and (2) evaluate the program before the 2008-09 biennium and report to the legislature whether it should be included in that biennial budget.

- 5** **Unverified ballots.** Provides for voters without photo identification to cast an unverified ballot. Creates a procedure for separating these from other ballots. Provides for counting unverified ballots unless they make up 10 percent or more of the ballots cast in the precinct. If unverified ballots reach that threshold, they will only be counted if a voter provides photo identification to the county auditor within three days after the election.

- 6** **Effective date.** The bill is effective July 1, 2007.