

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Authors: Kalin

Subject: Absentee Voting for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens

Analyst: Matt Gehring, 651-296-5052

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Overview

This bill modifies certain procedures and requirements governing absentee voting by military and non-resident citizen voters, including transmission of absentee ballots electronically in certain circumstances.

Section

- 1 **Registration Information; Restricted Data.** Provides that voter lists provided for public inspection may not include a voter's military identification number or passport number, in addition to the restrictions that exist under the current law.
- 2 **Military and Non-Resident Absentee Voting.** Eliminates the requirement that a voter who does not have a valid passport or identification card include a signed certification, from either a military officer or other individual authorized to administer oaths, that the absentee voter has attested to the truthfulness of the absentee ballot application.

In addition to eliminating the oath requirement, this section of the bill permits an applicant to include a Minnesota driver's license or state identification card number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number, instead of a passport number, and strikes the voter's ability to include a military identification card number. If a voter does not have access to any of these documents, the voter may attest, under penalty of perjury, to the truthfulness of the application.

- 3 **Recording Applications.** Requires the county auditor to record an individual's passport number, Minnesota driver's license number or state identification card number, or last four digits of their Social Security number in the statewide registration system (in addition to

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other existing requirements) upon receipt of an application for an overseas absentee ballot.

4 **Challenges.** Eliminates a reference to a municipal clerk. This section of statute establishes procedures for challenging the residence of an overseas absentee voter.

5 **Mailing of Ballots.** Provides an exception to the requirements related to mailing absentee ballots to reflect the electronic transmission process established in section 9 of the bill.

6 **Absentee Ballot Return Envelope.** Modifies the format and content requirements of the absentee ballot return envelope to reflect the changes made in section 3 of the bill. This section also requires a space on the return envelope for a voter to include an email address.

7 **Mailing Replacement Ballots.** Creates an exception to the current prohibition on mailing more than one set of ballots to a voter in any one election. The new language permits a county auditor to mail a replacement ballot if a ballot has been spoiled or lost in transit or if the voter's mailing address has changed since the date on which the original application was submitted.

8 **Electronic Ballot Transmission.** Establishes procedures for handling electronically transmitted absentee ballots.

Subd. 1. Certification. Permits the county auditor to transmit ballots, instructions, and an affidavit form and certification of voter eligibility to an absentee voter electronically.

Subd. 2. Return of ballots. Requires the absentee voter to return the ballots in a sealed envelope (not electronically).

9 **Write-In Absentee Ballot.** Permits an eligible voter who will be outside the United States during the 180 days prior to the general election to use the federal write-in absentee ballot for any federal, state, or local election.

10 **Absentee Ballot Board.** Requires the county auditor to establish an absentee ballot board to handle issues related to overseas absentee balloting, and establishes the board's duties and authority.

11 **Duties of Election Judges.** Conforms certain duties of election judges handling overseas absentee ballots to reflect the changes made by this bill.

If an identification number on a ballot return envelope does not match the identification number provided on the absentee ballot application, this section requires an election judge to make a reasonable effort to satisfy themselves through other provided information that the ballots were returned by the same person to whom they were sent.

12 **Election Day Special Procedures.** Recodifies language that was eliminated from section 12 of the bill into this section. The language specifies procedures where an absentee voter also appears and casts a ballot on election day.

13 **Separate Record of Overseas Ballots.** Requires a separate record of overseas absentee ballots cast to be generated for each precinct and provided to the election judges on election day. The election judges must make a record of any absentee ballots that are marked "accepted" but were not counted, and return the record to the appropriate election administrator.

14 **Repealer.** Repeals a subdivision relating to the duties of a municipal clerk, as they relate to handling overseas absentee voting for certain municipal elections. These duties are handled by a county auditor.

Section

The text of 203B.16, subd. 3 reads as follows:

“Subd. 3. **Duties of municipal clerk.** The municipal clerk shall administer the duties of the county auditor in sections 203B.16 to 203B.27 for municipal elections not held on the same day as a state or county election.”