

Subject Access to Presidential Primary Voter Data

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Summary

This bill modifies the existing law governing access to information on the party choice of individual voters participating in a presidential nomination primary.

Under current law, a list of each voter participating in the presidential nomination primary and their corresponding party ballot choice must be made available to the chairs of each major political party in the state. Qualifying parties are the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party; Grassroots-Legalize Cannabis Party; Legal Marijuana Now Party; and the Republican Party of Minnesota.

Access to the list. This bill would provide the list to a designated single representative of a party's national committee, and would require that person to submit a written request and acknowledgement of the requirements, remedies, and penalties provided in the bill regarding access to the data. The secretary of state is required to destroy data identifying the party choices of voters after the list is provided. See paragraph (a).

How the list may be used. The bill restricts use of the list to only activities necessary to verify compliance with national party rules governing the nomination of a candidate for president of the United States, and prohibits further distribution of the list to any other person, or for any other purpose. Violations of these requirements are subject to the same remedies as provided for violation of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (including a monetary penalty in certain circumstances, and a misdemeanor criminal penalty for willful violations). Current law does not contain a restriction on how the list may be used. See paragraph (b).

Voter opt-out. The bill allows a voter who wishes to be removed from the list to opt-out of inclusion, by submitting a statement to the secretary of state or county auditor making that request. Statements submitted for this purpose are private data. See paragraph (c).