

**HF4240 - 0 - Election Provisions Mod.; Local Exp. Reimbursement**

Chief Author: **Mike Freiberg**  
 Committee: **Elections Finance And Government Operations**  
 Date Completed: **3/11/2026 7:51:11 AM**  
 Agency: **Secretary of State**

State Fiscal Impact	Yes	No
Expenditures	X	
Fee/Departmental Earnings		X
Tax Revenue		X
Information Technology		X
Local Fiscal Impact	X	

This table shows direct impact to state government only. Local government impact, if any, is discussed in the narrative. Reductions shown in the parentheses.

State Cost (Savings)	Biennium			Biennium		
	Dollars in Thousands	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
General Fund	-	-	185	243	185	
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>185</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>185</b>	
<b>Biennial Total</b>			<b>185</b>		<b>428</b>	

Full Time Equivalent Positions (FTE)	Biennium			Biennium	
	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
General Fund	-	-	.02	.02	.02
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>.02</b>	<b>.02</b>	<b>.02</b>

**LBO Analyst's Comment**

I have reviewed this fiscal note for reasonableness of content and consistency with the LBO's Uniform Standards and Procedures.

**LBO Signature:** Adam Bolling    **Date:** 3/11/2026 7:51:11 AM  
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**State Cost (Savings) Calculation Details**

This table shows direct impact to state government only. Local government impact, if any, is discussed in the narrative. Reductions are shown in parentheses.

\*Transfers In/Out and Absorbed Costs are only displayed when reported.

<b>State Cost (Savings) = 1-2</b>		Biennium			Biennium	
Dollars in Thousands		FY2025	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029
General Fund	-	-	-	185	243	185
<b>Total</b>		-	-	<b>185</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Biennial Total</b>					<b>185</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>1 - Expenditures, Absorbed Costs*, Transfers Out*</b>						
General Fund	-	-	-	185	243	185
<b>Total</b>		-	-	<b>185</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>185</b>
<b>Biennial Total</b>					<b>185</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>2 - Revenues, Transfers In*</b>						
General Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Biennial Total</b>					-	-

**Bill Description**

This bill makes several technical and administrative changes to statutes governing election administration. Specifically:

**Section 1** amends the requirements for the designation or notice that a full-time city clerk will administer absentee voting. The bill requires this designation or notice specify whether the municipality’s office will be designated to administer in-person absentee voting starting on the 46th day before the election or early voting starting on the 18th day before the election.

**Section 2** removes an out of date and incomplete list of situations that would allow a voter to qualify to use the Agent Delivery process that begins 7 days before election day.

**Section 3** requires the use of the statewide voter registration system to administer absentee voting for all primary and general elections (not just the state primary and state general election). A town is not required to use the statewide voter registration system to administer absentee voting for a town election held in March, but may choose to do so. This section is effective September 1, 2027.

**Section 4** requires the early voting official to maintain a printed copy of the voter certificate. This section is effective upon the revisor of statutes’ receipt of the early voting certification and applies to elections held on or after the 85th day after the revisor of statutes receives the certification.

**Section 5** requires election officials use the procedures outlined in 204C.20 to balance the number of ballots in the early voting ballot box match the number of early voting voter certificates. This section is effective upon the revisor of statutes’ receipt of the early voting certification and applies to elections held on or after the 85th day after the revisor of statutes receives the certification.

**Section 6** amends the timing and publication requirements for the Office of the Secretary of State’s state elections laws publication. Under the bill, the Office of the Secretary of State would be required to prepare and make an electronic copy of the volume available on the office’s website by July 15 annually. This replaces the current system of publishing a hard copy in the odd-numbered years and an electronic copy in the even-numbered years.

**Section 7 and Section 8** strike obsolete references to ballots printed on colored paper.

**Section 9** requires the Office of the Secretary of State to reimburse counties and municipalities for expenses incurred in administering a special primary or special election for a state or federal office that is not held in conjunction with a state primary or state general election. The amounts necessary for the Secretary to make the reimbursements are appropriated annually from the general fund to the Secretary. This section is effective for special elections for which a writ is issued on or after July 1, 2026.

**Section 10** brings the county question special election timing in line with the timeline for other municipal special elections and requires that the special election be held on one of the uniform election dates set in state law.

**Section 11** repeals Minn. Stat. 5.31, which allows the secretary of state to sell intellectual property rights associated with the statewide voter registration system to other states or to units of local governments in other states.

### **Assumptions**

The only section that would result in costs to the Office of the Secretary of State is Section 9, which would require the Office of the Secretary of State to administer a fund to reimburse counties and municipalities for the costs of administering special primary and general elections. In the past decade, the state has had 22 special legislative elections. Of those, only two were held in conjunction with state general elections. Approximately half of these special elections were for house districts, and half for senate districts. Based on this, the Office of Secretary of State assumes that there will be an average of two special elections every year, with an average of one senate and one house special.

Based on the experience of administering the Presential Nomination Primary reimbursement process, the Office of Secretary of State anticipates approximately 50 hours per year of election administration staff time to review reimbursement submissions, and approximately four hours of fiscal staff time to process payments.

With respect to the reimbursement amount that will be paid to counties and municipalities for reimbursement of certain special election costs, the cost per special election will likely vary depending on the number of counties covered by the special election district, the number of absentee voting days provided in the writ, whether or not the special election contains vote by mail precincts, and other factors unique to each county and municipality. For the purpose of this note, the OSS has assumed the average out of pocket cost for a legislative district, based on the out of pocket costs to administer the presidential primary. The cost of administering the presidential primary in 2024 was approximately \$80,000 per house district and \$160,000 per senate district. This average was based on taking the total reimbursed to counties and local governments in 2024, and dividing by 134 and 67, respectively.

Finally, the Office of Secretary of State assumes there will be limited cost-savings from the changes in Section 6, because the Office of Secretary of State will no longer be required to print and mail the elections laws publication. In FY2025, the Office of the Secretary of State expended \$57,268.97 on printing and mailing the election laws publication. The Office of Secretary of State assumes that it will save these costs every two years with the removal of the requirement to print and mail the election laws publication.

### **Expenditure and/or Revenue Formula**

#### ***Special Election Reimbursement Administration Costs per Year***

50 hours of Election Administration Staff time at an average rate of salary and benefits of \$48.15/hour.

$$\$48.70 \times 50 = \$2,435$$

4 hours of Fiscal Staff time to process payments at an average salary and benefits of \$64.32/hour.

$$\$64.32 \times 4 = \$257.28$$

$$\text{Total Admin. Costs} = \$2,692.28$$

#### ***Special Election Reimbursements to Counties and Municipalities per Year***

House Special Costs = \$80,000

Senate Special Costs = \$160,000

$$\text{Total Reimbursement Costs} = \$240,000$$

#### ***Election Laws Printing and Mailing Savings Every Other Year***

Printing Savings (\$49,643.09)

Mailing Savings (\$7,625.88)

**Total Election Laws Savings = (\$57,268.97)**

### **Long-Term Fiscal Considerations**

The cost to reimburse expenses for special election expenses will continue, depending on the number of special elections required over time.

### **Local Fiscal Impact**

The Office of Secretary of State assumes some local government costs in the form of staff time for those jurisdictions that will be required to use the Statewide Voter Registration System in administering an election not held in conjunction with the state primary and state general election. Because most jurisdictions either hold their elections in conjunction with a state election or already choose to use the Statewide Voter Registration System, this will impact a small number of jurisdictions.

### **References/Sources**

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