

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill makes a number of miscellaneous changes related to election administration and redistricting at the county and city level.

- 1 **Absentee voting; office hours.** Eliminates a requirement that the offices of the county auditor and certain municipal clerks be open for absentee voting until 5:00 p.m. on the day before an election.
- 2 **Local redistricting; cities with wards.** Provides that an existing requirement (enacted into law in 2010) that cities with wards and a municipal election in the year ending in -1 must reestablish their ward boundaries at least 14 days prior to the time for filing affidavits of candidacy for council offices only applies to cities of the first class. Ward reestablishment is also changed from a mandate to a permissive option for these cities.

Cities of the first class, upon receipt of official 2010 census results, will likely be: Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Rochester. In 2011, the deadline for reestablishment of ward boundaries in these cities will be May 3.

- 3 **Combined polling places.** Permits a combined polling place (where voters from multiple precincts all vote in the same location) to be established for any group of precincts that share a common boundary line.

Current law only permits the establishment of a combined polling place for two precincts that are contiguous if the total number of registered voters in the combined location is fewer than 500.

- 4 **Boundary changes; exception.** Provides a conforming reference to new language related to redistricting in cities of the first class electing council members by ward in the year ending in -1, consistent with changes made earlier in the bill.

- 5 **Errors and omissions.** Requires the official responsible for printing election ballots to notify the court of the deadline for printing, if a petition alleging an error, omission, or wrongful act in the printing of a name or question on the ballot is filed in court.

The court would be required to expedite decisions in these cases to ensure timely printing of the

ballots.

6 Mail balloting. Provides conforming changes identical to those made in section 7 of the bill related to county mail and absentee ballots.

7 Mail balloting. Provides that, in jurisdictions using mail balloting, a single ballot board is responsible for accepting and rejecting both mail ballots and absentee ballots.

This section also requires that mail and absentee ballot vote totals be combined and reported as one vote total for each precinct.

8 Individuals in polling place; standing near voting equipment. Prohibits individuals other than voters from approaching within six feet of a ballot counter or electronic voting equipment. Current law prohibits anyone but a voter from approaching within six feet of a voting booth.

An exception is provided for individuals authorized by an election judge, and for election judges monitoring a ballot counter or electronic voting equipment.

9 Certification of voting equipment. Permits voting equipment to comply with technical certification requirements under state law if the equipment is certified by the Election Assistance Commission or another designated agency performing the same function.

10 Voters' rights; county redistricting. Modifies the timeline for a voter to request a court to review a redistricting plan for county commissioner districts. A filing would be required at least one week before the first day to file for office in the year ending in -2.

Current law permits the filing to be made on a timeline based on the date of the state primary.

11 County redistricting plan; filing. For a county redistricting plan to be effective for the next election, requires that the plan be filed with the county auditor at least two weeks prior to the first day for filing an affidavit of candidacy for county office. Current law requires the plan to be filed at least 30 days prior to the start of candidate filing.

This section also modifies language related to residency requirements for county commissioner offices.

12 Effective date. Provides that the bill is effective the day following final enactment.