

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Combining or moving a polling place in an emergency

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Overview

This bill provides procedures for combining or moving a polling place in the event of an emergency.

This bill is one of two submitted to the legislature for consideration by the Elections Emergency Planning Task Force, which met during the 2015 legislative interim. H.F. 2774 contains another portion of the task force's recommendations.

Section

1 Separate precincts; combined polling place. Permits a combined polling place to be established after the deadline provided in law for doing so (May 1), if the local elections official determines that an emergency situation preventing the safe, secure, and full operation of a polling place has occurred or is imminent. The process for establishing the combined polling place must follow the existing requirements of law, with certain procedural exceptions.

If a polling place is combined due to an emergency, the local elections official must comply with several notice requirements provided in the bill.

2 Change of polling place in an emergency. Establishes procedures for changing a polling place in an emergency.

Subd. 1. Application. Provides that a polling place may be changed, if an emergency occurs after the deadline for establishing a polling place, but before the polls close on election day. An emergency is defined as any situation that prevents the safe, secure, and full operation of the polling place.

Section

Subd. 2. Changing polling place. Establishes standards for procuring a new polling place. Among other requirements, the new polling place must be as near as possible to the polling place that can no longer be used, and must comply with other standards in law for a polling place, including accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Subd. 3. Notice. Provides several notice requirements in the event a polling place is moved due to an emergency.

3 Voters in line at closing. Permits a local elections official to extend a polling place's hours by up to one hour, in the event the polling place was combined or moved due to an emergency. If a polling place's hours are extended, the local elections official must comply with several notice requirements.

4 Repealer. Repeals section 204B.17, which currently provides a procedure for a polling place to be moved by the election judges, if the polling place does not meet the requirements of law. Much of the substance of this section is re-codified in sections 2 and 3 of this bill.