

Subject Elections Finance and Policy

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Overview

This bill is the Elections Finance and Policy bill. It appropriates operating funds to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, and provides an appropriation to the secretary of state for transfer to the Help America Vote Act Account. The bill also includes a variety of policy changes to the laws governing elections administration, campaigns and voting, and economic interest disclosures required of certain candidates.

Article 1: Elections and Campaign Finance Appropriations

Section Description – Article 1: Elections and Campaign Finance Appropriations

- 1 **Elections and campaign finance appropriations.**
Defines terms related to the appropriations contained in this bill.
- 2 **Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.**
Appropriates funds for fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027 to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, as detailed in the fiscal spreadsheet.
- 3 **Secretary of state.**
Appropriates \$200,000 from the general fund to the secretary of state, for transfer to the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) account. This amount constitutes the state match requirement for new federal HAVA grants appropriated to the states by Congress in 2024. The remainder of the secretary of state's fiscal year 2026 and fiscal year 2027 operating budget is appropriated in the State Government Finance bill.

Article 2: Elections and Campaign Finance Policy

Section Description – Article 2: Elections and Campaign Finance Policy

1 **Limitations.**

Amends the law authorizing access by United States census workers to multiple unit dwellings. These workers must be permitted access, at a minimum, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on any day. In addition, access must be permitted on 24 hours prior notice by the workers, rather than requiring that the workers schedule a prior appointment.

2 **Notice to residents.**

Encourages the owner, manager, or operator of a multiple unit dwelling to notify residents of the days on which a United States census worker has provided notice of an intent to be present.

3 **Time for filing.**

Amends the deadline for a candidate to file a statement of economic interest with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board. The new deadline is 14 days after the candidate filing period ends, rather than 14 days after the candidate actually files for the office.

This change is effective January 1, 2026.

4 **Determination of residence.**

Specifies that for a person committed to a secure treatment facility under chapter 253D (the Minnesota Sex Offender Program) as having a sexual psychopathic personality or as a sexually dangerous person, the person's residence for voting purposes is the person's last known residential address prior to the issuance of the commitment order.

5 **Election day registration.**

Eliminates a requirement that a residential facility operator provide a list of employees working in the facility to be used in election day registration. Instead, proof of employment provided by a residential facility employee is sufficient to demonstrate eligibility to vouch for the residence of those living in the facility. The secretary of state is required to publish guidance for residential facilities and residential facility employees on the vouching process and other requirements of this section.

This section also prohibits an election judge from vouching for any individual who appears in the precinct where the election judge is working.

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6 Additional proofs of residence permitted for students.

Provides that the additional proofs of residence permitted for postsecondary students registering on election day includes registration during the 18 day early voting period in advance of election day.

7 Form (voter registration applications).

Eliminates a requirement that a box indicating a voter's preference to join the permanent absentee voter list appear on the voter registration form.

8 Application procedures (absentee voting).

Establishes deadlines for the submission of absentee ballot applications. Applications may be submitted in person at any time no later than the day before the election, consistent with current law. Applications not submitted in person must be received not less than seven days before the day of the election. After seven days before the election, the secretary of state must replace the online absentee ballot application with information detailing the available options to vote before and on the upcoming election day.

This section also requires applicants using the online application to provide *both* a Minnesota driver's license or state ID card number and the last four digits of their Social Security Number, unless the applicant affirmatively certifies that they do not possess one of those numbers (the applicant would still be required to provide the other number).

If an application is received after 5:00 p.m. seven days prior to the election, the official in charge of the absentee ballot board must attempt to contact the applicant by telephone or email to notify the applicant of other opportunities to vote in the election. These attempts must be documented.

The timeline for delivery of an absentee ballot application by someone other than the voter is also modified; by this section, the application must be returned within seven days, rather than ten days, after the voter dated the application, and no later than seven days, rather than six days, prior to the election.

9 Generally (early voting).

Permits a municipality operating a designated absentee voting location to provide that location for only the 18 day early voting period, rather than the entire 46 day absentee voting period.

A county auditor may designate a municipal clerk to administer absentee and early voting only if the clerk accepts that responsibility.

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10 Marking and return by voter.

Updates terminology related to absentee ballot envelopes, and requires that an absentee ballot returned in person on election day must be submitted to the county auditor or municipal clerk by 5:00 p.m., rather than 8:00 p.m.

11 Procedures on receipt of ballots.

Updates terminology related to absentee ballot envelopes.

12 Temporary locations.

Permits federally-recognized Indian Tribes to request that a temporary polling place for early voting be located on off-reservation Tribal Lands, in addition to the authority in current law for placement on reservation lands.

Provides notice requirements related to the designation of additional polling place locations that will be open for voting before election day. Within five business days of designating an additional location, a notice must be posted on the county's or municipality's websites, and on the website of the secretary of state. If a designation applies to both a primary and general election, a separate notice must be provided for each election and the notice for the general election must not be posted until after the date of the primary election.

13 Names of persons; absentee ballot applications.

Adds to the list of items that must be included on the public information list related to absentee ballot applications: the date on which an application was signed, the date on which the application was accepted, and the method of submission.

14 Opening of envelopes.

Provides additional requirements for ballot boards when reviewing and opening absentee envelopes, including verifying the number of envelopes and the number of ballots are equal, at various stages of the ballot board's work. The ballot board must notify the official responsible for the board's work if any discrepancy is discovered.

15 Storage and counting of absentee ballots.

Provides conforming changes related to the additional absentee ballot board requirements established in this bill.

16 Emergency response providers.

Provides that the absentee ballot application deadlines established in this bill do not apply to applications submitted by certain emergency response providers and utility workers deployed in response to an emergency.

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- 17 **Reasonable accommodation for voter with disability.**
Provides that the absentee ballot application deadlines established in this bill do not apply to applications submitted by certain voters with a print disability, or with a disability that interferes with the effective reading, writing, or use of printed materials.
- 18 **Processing of ballots.**
Establishes procedures for processing of ballots at the end of each day on which early voting occurs. These procedures include noting the date, voting location, and number of ballots cast; ensuring that the number of ballots removed from a ballot box is equal to the number of voter certificates that were signed by the voters; and sealing and securing all voted and unvoted ballots present in the early voting location.
- 19 **Address, electronic mail address, and telephone number.**
Extends an existing requirement that candidates provide an email address, to include candidates for judicial office, county attorney, and county sheriff.

This section also provides standards for use of certain documents used by a candidate to prove their residence in the district.
- 20 **Absent candidates.**
Extends a requirement that candidates provide proof of residence to include candidates filing using the special “absent candidate” procedure. The absent candidate filing procedure applies if the candidate will be absent from the state for the entirety of the filing period. Or the remainder of a filing period, in certain circumstances.
- 21 **Other elections.**
Extends a requirement that candidates provide proof of residence to include candidates filling for city, town, and certain other elected offices.
- 22 **Separate precincts; combined polling place.**
Requires that, where multiple polling places are combined in a single location, the secretary of state and county auditor must provide guidance to the election judges on the procedures used to ensure each voter is provided the correct ballot for the voter’s precinct. A map showing the precincts served by the combined polling place and a notice that multiple ballot styles are in use must be prominently displayed near the entrance to the polling place.
- 23 **Notice to voters.**
Requires that, if the location of a polling place is changed, the local election official must post a notice at the closed location, and if practical, must also post a notice in a

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location visible to voters who vote from their vehicle. The notice is required to be posted for each special, primary, and general election until a presidential election or redistricting has occurred.

A sample notice to be used for this purpose must be prepared by the secretary of state.

24 Prohibited locations.

Prohibits polling places from being designated in any place, or in any adjoining room, to a location where cannabis products are served or sold, in addition to the existing prohibition on locations where intoxicating liquors or nonintoxicating malt beverages are sold.

25 Chain of custody plans.

Requires county auditors to develop a chain of custody plan to be used in all state, county, municipal, school district, and special district elections held in the county. Additional detail regarding the content of a chain of custody plan is provided.

Municipal, school district, and special district clerks are permitted to create a local chain of custody plan for elections not held in conjunction with a federal, state, or county election so long as it meets or exceeds the county chain of custody plan.

26 Party balance requirement.

Extends the existing law requiring party balance for election judges to include any location where ballots are being counted, recounted, or reviewed. Each major political party must be represented by at least one election judge in each precinct.

27 Appointment lists; duties of political parties and secretary of state.

Modifies standards and process related to the creation and submission of lists of individuals willing to serve as election judges, including the designation of individuals willing to serve as alternates in the event of an unexpected vacancy or if all positions representing a political party are not able to be filled.

The secretary of state is required to provide a form that may be used by a political party to recruit individuals willing to serve as election judges.

28 Election judges; oath.

Expands the oath required to be signed by election judges to include a prohibition on sharing materially false information, and a prohibition on intentionally hindering, interfering with, or preventing a person from voting, registering to vote, or aiding another person in voting.

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- 29 **Duties of county auditor.**
Requires that training provided to election judges by each county auditor be consistent with the training programs established by the secretary of state.
- 30 **Election judge advice telephone line.**
Requires the secretary of state to provide a dedicated telephone line for use by election judges on each state election day. The line must be available for election judges to clarify procedures in the event the municipal clerk and county auditor’s offices cannot be reached.
- 31 **Errors and omissions; remedy.**
Provides a method of resolving allegations of an error or omission in the election administration process by mutual agreement of the impacted candidate and the entity responsible for administering the election.
- 32 **Procedure; voting prior to election day.**
For jurisdictions that conduct elections entirely by mail, requires ballots to be mailed at least 28 days before any election.
- 33 **Voter’s Bill of Rights.**
Eliminates a reference to a prohibition on candidate’s assisting a voter in marking a ballot. This change conforms to a court decision declaring this prohibition unconstitutional.
- 34 **Counting and initialing.**
Eliminates a reference to election judges initialing the “backs of” all ballots in a precinct. The initialing requirement would still remain, but would not specify where the initials must be placed.
- 35 **Physical assistance in marking ballots.**
Permits a voter who needs assistance in marking a ballot to request it at any location where ballots may be cast, including early and in-person absentee voting locations, and in a polling place on election day.
- 36 **Outside the polling place.**
Permits a voter who is unable to enter a polling place to mark and cast a ballot to do so from the voter’s motor vehicle, at any location where ballots may be cast, including early and in-person absentee voting locations, and at a polling place on election day.

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37 Vacancy filled at general election.

In special elections to fill a vacant seat in the legislature on the date of the state general election, requires that the filing period for the vacancy to be concurrent with the filing period for the general election when practicable. If that filing period is not possible, the period must be at least five days and no more than ten days in length, excluding holidays.

38 Special election when legislature will be in session.

Amends the law governing special elections to fill a vacant seat in the legislature, when a legislative session will be active and the person elected can be seated and exercise duties immediately. The expedited timeline for these elections would apply to vacancies occurring up to the 50th day prior to the opening day of a session (rather than the 40th day prior); and the special election must be held no more than 40 days after a writ is issued (rather than 35 days after the writ). The candidate filing period would newly be required to be at least five days and no more than ten days in length, excluding holidays.

39 Special election at other times.

In special elections to fill a vacant seat in the legislature that do not occur simultaneously with a state general election, and in which the elected candidate cannot immediately be seated in an active legislative session, specifies that the candidate filing period be at least five days and no more than ten days in length, excluding holidays.

40 Filing period.

Modifies the required filing period for candidates running for office in a municipality that does not conduct a primary election, and which conducts its election in November. The filing period is required to be between 98 and 112 days prior to the November election, rather than between 84 and 98 days prior to the election.

This change is effective January 1, 2026.

41 Prohibited connections.

Requires that a password used to access any ballot recording or tabulating system be kept in a safe and secure place in the precinct so that it is not accessible to or visible by the public.

42 Information required.

Permits candidates and candidate campaign committees who file campaign finance reports under chapter 211A (most local offices file under this chapter) to attest that they do not possess an email address, if applicable.

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43 Publicly funded organizations; campaign expenditures prohibited.

Prohibits entities or organizations, including nonprofit organizations, that receive state funding from making a campaign expenditure or otherwise expending money for a political purpose, unless the entity or organization uses separate accounts for political activities and the activities supported by state funding. Other details are provided. “State funding” is defined to include receipt of public funds through a direct appropriation or legislative-named, competitive, or other form of grant.

44 Exceptions.

Amends the law authorizing access by candidates to multiple unit dwellings. Candidates must be permitted access, at a minimum, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on any day. In addition, access must be permitted on 24 hours prior notice by the candidate, rather than requiring a prior appointment.

45 Notice to residents.

Encourages the owner, manager, or operator of a multiple unit dwelling to notify residents of the days on which a candidate has provided notice of an intent to be present.

46 Ballot questions.

Extends the deadline for a special county election to be declared, to require the election within 84 days, rather than 74 days, after the resolution declaring the election is adopted.

47 Economic interest disclosure; Special School District No. 1.

Amends the deadline for a candidate for Minneapolis School Board to file a statement of economic interest with the school district. The new deadline is 14 days after the candidate filing period ends, rather than 14 days after the candidate actually files for the office.

This change is effective January 1, 2026.

48 Elections of municipal officers.

Requires the use of uniform election dates and ballot preparation laws, when a municipal officer election occurs as a result of a local government incorporation or consolidation.

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49 Repealer.

Repeals a law that permits untrained election judges to serve in precincts where fewer than 100 individuals voted in the last state general election.



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