

A bill for an act
relating to elections; authorizing absentee voting without excuse; amending
Minnesota Statutes 2008, sections 203B.02, subdivision 1; 203B.04, subdivisions
1, 6.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 203B.02, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Unable to go to polling place; voting by absentee ballot.** ~~(a) Any~~
~~eligible voter who reasonably expects to be unable to go to the polling place on election~~
~~day in the precinct where the individual maintains residence because of absence from the~~
~~precinct; illness, including isolation or quarantine under sections 144.419 to 144.4196~~
~~or United States Code, title 42, sections 264 to 272; disability; religious discipline;~~
~~observance of a religious holiday; or service as an election judge in another precinct may~~
vote by absentee ballot as provided in sections 203B.04 to 203B.15.

~~(b) If the governor has declared an emergency and filed the declaration with the~~
~~secretary of state under section 12.31, and the declaration states that the emergency has~~
~~made it difficult for voters to go to the polling place on election day, any voter in a~~
~~precinct covered by the declaration may vote by absentee ballot as provided in sections~~
~~203B.04 to 203B.15.~~

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 203B.04, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Application procedures.** Except as otherwise allowed by
subdivision 2 or by section 203B.11, subdivision 4, an application for absentee ballots
for any election may be submitted at any time not less than one day before the day of
that election. The county auditor shall prepare absentee ballot application forms in the

format provided by the secretary of state, notwithstanding rules on absentee ballot forms, and shall furnish them to any person on request. By January 1 of each even-numbered year, the secretary of state shall make the forms to be used available to auditors through electronic means. An application submitted pursuant to this subdivision shall be in writing and shall be submitted to:

(a) (1) the county auditor of the county where the applicant maintains residence; or
(b) (2) the municipal clerk of the municipality, or school district if applicable, where the applicant maintains residence.

An application shall be approved if it is timely received, signed and dated by the applicant, contains the applicant's name and residence and mailing addresses, ~~and states that the applicant is eligible to vote by absentee ballot for one of the reasons specified in section 203B.02.~~ The application may contain a request for the voter's date of birth, which must not be made available for public inspection. An application may be submitted to the county auditor or municipal clerk by an electronic facsimile device. An application mailed or returned in person to the county auditor or municipal clerk on behalf of a voter by a person other than the voter must be deposited in the mail or returned in person to the county auditor or municipal clerk within ten days after it has been dated by the voter and no later than six days before the election. The absentee ballot applications or a list of persons applying for an absentee ballot may not be made available for public inspection until the close of voting on election day.

An application under this subdivision may contain an application under subdivision 5 to automatically receive an absentee ballot application.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 203B.04, subdivision 6, is amended to read:

Subd. 6. **Ongoing absentee status; termination.** (a) An eligible voter may apply to a county auditor or municipal clerk for status as an ongoing absentee voter ~~who reasonably expects to meet the requirements of section 203B.02, subdivision 1.~~ Each applicant must automatically be provided with an absentee ballot application for each ensuing election other than an election by mail conducted under section 204B.45, and must have the status of ongoing absentee voter indicated on the voter's registration record.

(b) Ongoing absentee voter status ends on:

(1) the voter's written request;
(2) the voter's death;
(3) return of an ongoing absentee ballot as undeliverable;
(4) a change in the voter's status so that the voter is not eligible to vote under section 201.15 or 201.155; or

- 3.1 (5) placement of the voter's registration on inactive status under section 201.171.