SENATE
STATE OF MINNESOTA
NINETY-FOURTH SESSION

S.F. No. 2384

(SENATE AUTHORS: WESTLIN and Rest)

DATE	D-PG	OFFICIAL STATUS
03/10/2025	717	Introduction and first reading Referred to Elections
03/13/2025	777	Author added Rest
03/17/2025		Comm report: To pass as amended and re-refer to Judiciary and Public Safety

A bill for an act

relating to elections; making various changes related to election administration; modifying provisions related to voter registration; modifying provisions related to absentee voting; modifying requirements relating to appointing election judges; clarifying terminology; modifying timelines; modifying annexation laws in relation to election timelines; repealing the voting equipment grant account; transferring money; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 201.061, subdivisions 3, 3a; 201.071, subdivision 1; 203B.04, subdivision 1; 203B.05, subdivision 1; 203B.08, subdivisions 1, 3; 203B.081, subdivision 4; 203B.121, subdivisions 4, 5; 203B.30, subdivision 3; 204B.06, subdivision 1b; 204B.09, subdivisions 1a, 2; 204B.14, subdivision 4a; 204B.21, subdivisions 1, 2; 204B.24; 204B.25, subdivision 3; 204B.44; 204B.45, subdivision 2; 204C.08, subdivision 1d; 204C.09, subdivision 1; 204C.10; 205.185, subdivision 3; 205A.10, subdivision 3; 205A.11, subdivision 2; 368.47; 375.20; 414.09, subdivision 3; 447.32, subdivision 4; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 204B; repealing Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 206.95; 209.06.

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

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 201.061, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Election day registration.** (a) An individual who is eligible to vote may register on election day by appearing in person at the polling place for the precinct in which the individual maintains residence, by completing a registration application, making an oath in the form prescribed by the secretary of state and providing proof of residence. An individual may prove residence for purposes of registering by:

(1) presenting a driver's license or Minnesota identification card issued pursuant to section 171.07;

(2) presenting any document approved by the secretary of state as proper identification;

(3) presenting a current student fee statement that contains the student's valid address in the precinct together with a picture identification card; or

(4) having a voter who is registered to vote in the precinct, or an employee who provides proof that they are employed by and working in a residential facility in the precinct and vouching for a resident in the facility, sign an oath in the presence of the election judge vouching that the voter or employee personally knows that the individual is a resident of the precinct. A voter who has been vouched for on election day may not sign a proof of residence oath vouching for any other individual on that election day. A voter who is registered to vote in the precinct may sign up to eight proof-of-residence oaths on any election day. This limitation does not apply to an employee of a residential facility described in this clause. The secretary of state shall provide a form for election judges to use in recording the number of individuals for whom a voter signs proof-of-residence oaths on election day. The form must include space for the maximum number of individuals for whom a voter may sign proof-of-residence oaths. For each proof-of-residence oath, the form must include a statement that the individual: (i) is registered to vote in the precinct or is an employee of a residential facility in the precinct, (ii) personally knows that the voter is a resident of the precinct, and (iii) is making the statement on oath. The form must include a space for the voter's printed name, signature, telephone number, and address.

The oath required by this subdivision and Minnesota Rules, part 8200.9939, must be attached to the voter registration application.

~~(b) The operator of a residential facility shall prepare a list of the names of its employees currently working in the residential facility and the address of the residential facility. The operator shall certify the list and provide it to the appropriate county auditor no less than 20 days before each election for use in election day registration.~~

~~(c)~~ (b) "Residential facility" means transitional housing as defined in section 256K.48, subdivision 1; a supervised living facility licensed by the commissioner of health under section 144.50, subdivision 6; a nursing home as defined in section 144A.01, subdivision 5; an assisted living facility licensed by the commissioner of health under chapter 144G; a veterans home operated by the board of directors of the Minnesota Veterans Homes under chapter 198; a residence licensed by the commissioner of human services to provide a residential program as defined in section 245A.02, subdivision 14; a residential facility for persons with a developmental disability licensed by the commissioner of human services under section 252.28; setting authorized to provide housing support as defined in section 256I.03, subdivision 10a; a shelter for battered women as defined in section 611A.37, subdivision 4; a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter or dwelling designed to

provide temporary living accommodations for the homeless; a facility where a provider operates a residential treatment program as defined in section 245.462, subdivision 23; or a facility where a provider operates an adult foster care program as defined in section 245A.02, subdivision 6c.

~~(d)~~ (c) For tribal band members, an individual may prove residence for purposes of registering by:

(1) presenting an identification card issued by the tribal government of a tribe recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, United States Department of the Interior, that contains the name, address, signature, and picture of the individual; or

(2) presenting an identification card issued by the tribal government of a tribe recognized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, United States Department of the Interior, that contains the name, signature, and picture of the individual and also presenting one of the documents listed in Minnesota Rules, part 8200.5100, subpart 2, item B.

~~(e)~~ (d) A county, school district, or municipality may require that an election judge responsible for election day registration initial each completed registration application.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 201.061, subdivision 3a, is amended to read:

Subd. 3a. **Additional proofs of residence permitted for students.** (a) If an eligible voter's name; student identification number, if available; and address within the precinct appear on a current residential housing list under section 135A.17 certified to the county auditor by the postsecondary educational institution, the voter may prove residence by presenting a current valid photo identification issued by a postsecondary educational institution in Minnesota; identification authorized in subdivision 3, paragraph (a), clause (1) or (2); or identification authorized in subdivision 3, paragraph ~~(d)~~ (c), clause (1) or (2).

(b) This additional proof of residence for students must not be allowed unless the postsecondary educational institution submits to the county auditor no later than 60 days prior to the election a written agreement that the postsecondary educational institution will certify for use at the election accurate updated residential housing lists under section 135A.17. A written agreement is effective for the election and all subsequent elections held in that calendar year, including the November general election.

(c) The additional proof of residence for students must be allowed on an equal basis for voters who reside in housing meeting the requirements of section 135A.17, if the residential housing lists certified by the postsecondary educational institution meet the requirements of this subdivision.

(d) An updated residential housing list must be certified to the county auditor no later than 20 days prior to each election. The certification must be dated and signed by the chief officer or designee of the postsecondary educational institution and must state that the list is current and accurate and includes only the names of persons residing in the institution's housing and, for students who do not live in the institution's housing, that it reflects the institution's records as of the date of the certification.

(e) This additional proof of residence for students must be allowed during the 18 days before an election and on election day. The county auditor shall instruct the election judges ~~of the precinct~~ in procedures for use of the list in conjunction with photo identification. The auditor shall supply a list to the election judges with the election supplies ~~for the precinct~~.

(f) The county auditor shall notify all postsecondary educational institutions in the county of the provisions of this subdivision.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 201.071, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Form.** Both paper and electronic voter registration applications must contain the same information unless otherwise provided by law. A voter registration application must contain spaces for the following required information: voter's first name, middle name, and last name; voter's previous name, if any; voter's current address; voter's previous address, if any; voter's date of birth; voter's municipality and county of residence; voter's telephone number, if provided by the voter; date of registration; current and valid Minnesota driver's license number or Minnesota state identification number, or if the voter has no current and valid Minnesota driver's license or Minnesota state identification, the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number; ~~a box to indicate a voter's preference to join the permanent absentee voter list;~~ and voter's signature. The paper registration application must provide a space for a voter to provide a physical description of the location of their residence, if the voter resides in an area lacking a specific physical address. The description must be sufficient for the county auditor to identify the correct precinct for the voter. The description may include the closest cross street or the nearest address to the described location that is identified on a precinct map, and directions from that cross street or address to the described location, including but not limited to the cardinal direction and approximate distance to the location. The paper registration application may include the voter's email address, if provided by the voter. The electronic voter registration application must include the voter's email address. The registration application may include the voter's interest in serving as an election judge, if indicated by the voter. The application must also contain the following certification of voter eligibility:

"I certify that I:

(1) am at least 16 years old and understand that I must be at least 18 years old to be eligible to vote;

(2) am a citizen of the United States;

(3) will have maintained residence in Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding election day;

(4) maintain residence at the address or location given on the registration form;

(5) am not under court-ordered guardianship in which the court order revokes my right to vote;

(6) have not been found by a court to be legally incompetent to vote;

(7) am not currently incarcerated for a conviction of a felony offense; and

(8) have read and understand the following statement: that giving false information is a felony punishable by not more than five years imprisonment or a fine of not more than $10,000, or both."

The certification must include boxes for the voter to respond to the following questions:

"(1) Are you a citizen of the United States?" and

"(2) Are you at least 16 years old and will you be at least 18 years old on or before the day of the election in which you intend to vote?"

And the instruction:

"If you checked 'no' to either of these questions, do not complete this form."

The form of the voter registration application and the certification of voter eligibility must be as provided in this subdivision and approved by the secretary of state. Voter registration forms authorized by the National Voter Registration Act must also be accepted as valid. The federal postcard application form must also be accepted as valid if it is not deficient and the voter is eligible to register in Minnesota.

An individual may use a voter registration application to apply to register to vote in Minnesota or to change information on an existing registration.

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.04, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Application procedures.** (a) 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 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. An application may be submitted in person, by electronic facsimile device, by electronic mail, or by mail to:

(1) the county auditor of the county where the applicant maintains residence; or

(2) the municipal clerk of the municipality, or school district if applicable, where the applicant maintains residence.

(b) An absentee ballot application may alternatively be submitted electronically through a secure website that shall be maintained by the secretary of state for this purpose. Notwithstanding paragraph (d), the secretary of state must require applicants using the website to submit the applicant's email address and verifiable Minnesota driver's license number, Minnesota state identification card number, or the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number. This paragraph does not apply to a town election held in March.

(c) An application submitted electronically under this paragraph may only be transmitted to the county auditor for processing if the secretary of state has verified the application information matches the information in a government database associated with the applicant's driver's license number, state identification card number, or Social Security number. The secretary of state must review all unverifiable applications for evidence of suspicious activity and must forward any such application to an appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation.

(d) 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, date of birth, and at least one of the following:

(1) the applicant's Minnesota driver's license number;

(2) Minnesota state identification card number;

(3) the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number; or

(4) a statement that the applicant does not have any of these numbers.

(e) To be approved, the application must contain an oath that the information contained on the form is accurate, that the applicant is applying on the applicant's own behalf, and that the applicant is signing the form under penalty of perjury.

(f) An applicant's full date of birth, Minnesota driver's license or state identification number, and the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number 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.

(g) An application under this subdivision ~~may~~ must contain ~~an application under subdivision 5~~ a space to apply to automatically receive an absentee ballot under subdivision 5.

Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.05, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Generally.** The full-time clerk of any city or town shall administer the provisions of sections 203B.04 to 203B.15 and 203B.30 if:

(1) the county auditor of that county has designated the clerk to administer them; or

(2) the clerk has given the county auditor of that county notice of intention to administer them.

The designation or notice must specify whether the clerk will be responsible for the administration of a ballot board as provided in section 203B.121 and whether the municipality's office will be designated an absentee voting location pursuant to section 203B.081, subdivision 1, or only for early voting pursuant to section 203B.081, subdivision 1a.

A clerk of a city that is located in more than one county may only administer the provisions of sections 203B.04 to 203B.15 and 203B.30 if the clerk has been designated by each of the county auditors or has provided notice to each of the county auditors that the city will administer absentee voting. A clerk may only administer the provisions of sections 203B.04 to 203B.15 and 203B.30 if the clerk has technical capacity to access the statewide voter registration system in the secure manner prescribed by the secretary of state. The secretary of state must identify hardware, software, security, or other technical prerequisites necessary to ensure the security, access controls, and performance of the statewide voter registration system. A clerk must receive training approved by the secretary of state on the use of the statewide voter registration system before administering this section. A clerk may not use the statewide voter registration system until the clerk has received the required

training. The county auditor must notify the secretary of state of any municipal clerk who will be administering the provisions of this section and the duties that the clerk will administer.

EFFECTIVE DATE. 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, whichever is later.

Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.08, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Marking and return by voter.** (a) An eligible voter who receives absentee ballots as provided in this chapter shall mark them in the manner specified in the directions for casting the absentee ballots. The ~~return~~ signature envelope containing marked ballots may be mailed as provided in the directions for casting the absentee ballots, may be left with the county auditor or municipal clerk who transmitted the absentee ballots to the voter, or may be left in a drop box as provided in section 203B.082. If delivered in person, the ~~return~~ signature envelope must be submitted to the county auditor or municipal clerk by 8:00 p.m. on election day.

(b) The voter may designate an agent to deliver in person the sealed ~~absentee ballot return~~ signature envelope to the county auditor or municipal clerk or to deposit the ~~return~~ signature envelope in the mail. An agent may deliver or mail the ~~return~~ signature envelopes of not more than three voters in any election. Any person designated as an agent who tampers with either the ~~return~~ signature envelope or the voted ballots or does not immediately mail or deliver the ~~return~~ signature envelope to the county auditor or municipal clerk is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.08, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Procedures on receipt of ballots.** When absentee ballots are returned to a county auditor or municipal clerk, that official shall stamp or initial and date the ~~return~~ signature envelope and place it in a locked ballot container or other secured and locked space with other ~~return~~ signature envelopes received by that office. Within five days after receipt, the county auditor or municipal clerk shall deliver to the ballot board all ~~ballots~~ signature envelopes received, except that during the 14 days immediately preceding an election, the county auditor or municipal clerk shall deliver all ~~ballots~~ signature envelopes received to the ballot board within three days. ~~Ballots~~ Signature envelopes received on election day after 8:00 p.m. shall be marked as received late by the county auditor or municipal clerk, and must not be delivered to the ballot board.

Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.081, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

Subd. 4. **Temporary locations.** (a) A county auditor or municipal clerk authorized under section 203B.05 to administer voting before election day may designate additional polling places with days and hours that differ from those required by section 203B.085. A designation authorized by this subdivision must be made at least 47 days before the election. The county auditor or municipal clerk must provide notice to the secretary of state at the time that the designations are made.

(b) At the request of a federally recognized Indian Tribe with a reservation or off-reservation Tribal lands in the county, the county auditor must establish an additional polling place for at least one day on the Indian reservation or off-reservation Tribal lands on a site agreed upon by the Tribe and the county auditor that is accessible to the county auditor by a public road.

(c) At the request of a postsecondary institution or the student government organization of a postsecondary institution in the county or municipality, the county auditor or a municipal clerk authorized to administer absentee voting under section 203B.05 must establish an additional temporary polling place for the state general election or the odd-year city general election for at least one day at a location agreed upon by the institution and the county auditor or municipal clerk that:

(1) is accessible to the public;

(2) satisfies the requirements of state and federal law; and

(3) is on the institution's campus or is within one-half mile of the institution's campus and is reasonably accessible to the institution's students.

A request must be made no later than May 31 before an election and the request is valid only for that election. This paragraph only applies to a postsecondary institution that provides on-campus student housing to 100 or more students. Nothing in this paragraph prevents the county auditor or municipal clerk from engaging in a dialogue with the entity that made the request regarding potential alternative locations for a temporary polling place that does not meet the requirements of clause (3). An entity that made a request for a temporary polling place may withdraw its request by notifying the county auditor or municipal clerk.

Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.121, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

Subd. 4. **Opening of envelopes.** (a) After the close of business on the 19th day before the election, the ballots from ~~secrecy~~ ballot envelopes within the signature envelopes marked "Accepted" may be opened, duplicated as needed in the manner provided in section 206.86,

subdivision 5, initialed by the members of the ballot board, and deposited in the appropriate ballot box. If more than one voted ballot is enclosed in the ballot envelope, the ballots must be returned in the manner provided by section 204C.25 for return of spoiled ballots, and may not be counted.

(b) Accepted signature envelopes must be segregated by precinct and processed in accordance with this subdivision on a precinct-by-precinct basis. Precincts within a combination polling place established in section 205A.11, subdivision 2, may be processed together. At each step, members of the ballot board must notify the official responsible for the ballot board if there is a discrepancy in the count. Any discrepancy must be noted in the ballot board incident log.

(c) Before opening accepted signature envelopes, two members of the ballot board must count and record the number of envelopes and ensure that the count matches either the number of accepted signature envelopes provided by the official responsible for the ballot board or the number of signature envelopes accepted by the ballot board that day.

(d) After ballot envelopes have been removed from the signature envelopes, two members of the ballot board must count and record the number of ballot envelopes to ensure the count matches the number of accepted signature envelopes. Any discrepancy must be noted in the ballot board incident log. The governing body responsible for the ballot board must retain all ballot envelopes through the contest period of that election.

(e) After ballots have been removed from the ballot envelopes, two members of the ballot board must count and record the number of ballots to ensure the count matches the number of accepted signature envelopes, accounting for any empty envelopes or spoiled ballots, which must be noted on the ballot board incident log.

Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.121, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

Subd. 5. **Storage and counting of absentee ballots.** (a) On a day on which absentee ballots are inserted into a ballot box, two members of the ballot board must:

(1) remove the ballots from the ballot box at the end of the day;

(2) without inspecting the ballots, ensure that the number of ballots removed from the ballot box is equal to the number of ~~voters whose~~ absentee ballots ~~were accepted~~ from the tally in subdivision 4 that were to be inserted into the ballot box that day; and

(3) seal and secure all voted and unvoted ballots present in that location at the end of the day.

(b) After the polls have closed on election day, two members of the ballot board must count the ballots, tabulating the vote in a manner that indicates each vote of the voter and the total votes cast for each candidate or question. In state primary and state general elections, the results must indicate the total votes cast for each candidate or question in each precinct and report the vote totals tabulated for each precinct. The count must be recorded on a summary statement in substantially the same format as provided in section 204C.26. The ballot board ~~shall~~ must submit at least one completed summary statement to the county auditor or municipal clerk. The county auditor or municipal clerk may require the ballot board to submit a sufficient number of completed summary statements to comply with the provisions of section 204C.27, or the county auditor or municipal clerk may certify reports containing the details of the ballot board summary statement to the recipients of the summary statements designated in section 204C.27.

~~In state primary and state general elections,~~ These vote totals ~~shall~~ must be added to the vote totals on the summary statements of the returns for the appropriate precinct. ~~In other elections, these vote totals may be added to the vote totals on the summary statement of returns for the appropriate precinct or may be reported as a separate total.~~

The count ~~shall~~ must be public. No vote totals from ballots may be made public before the close of voting on election day.

(c) In addition to the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b), if the task has not been completed previously, the members of the ballot board must verify as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours after the end of the hours for voting, that voters whose absentee ballots arrived after the rosters were marked or supplemental reports were generated and whose ballots were accepted did not vote in person on election day. An absentee ballot submitted by a voter who has voted in person on election day must be rejected. All other accepted absentee ballots must be opened in accordance with the procedures outlined in subdivision 4, except for the absentee ballots cast using the alternative procedure in section 203B.081, subdivision 3, duplicated if necessary, and counted by members of the ballot board. The vote totals from these ballots must be incorporated into the totals with the other absentee ballots and handled according to paragraph (b).

Sec. 11. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 203B.30, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Processing of ballots.** At the end of each day when early voting occurs, the early voting officials must:

(1) remove and secure ballots cast ~~during the early voting period following the procedures in section 203B.121, subdivision 5, paragraph (a).~~ that day, noting the date, voting location, and number of ballots cast;

(2) without inspecting the ballots, ensure that the number of ballots removed from the ballot box is equal to the number of voter certificates that were signed by voters in subdivision 2, paragraph (b); and

(3) seal and secure all voted and unvoted ballots present in that location at the end of the day.

The ~~absentee~~ ballot board must count the ballots after the polls have closed on election day following the procedures in section 203B.121, subdivision 5, paragraph (b).

EFFECTIVE DATE. 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, whichever is later.

Sec. 12. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.06, subdivision 1b, is amended to read:

Subd. 1b. **Address, electronic mail address, and telephone number.** (a) An affidavit of candidacy must state a telephone number where the candidate can be contacted. An affidavit must also state the candidate's or campaign's nongovernment issued electronic mail address or an attestation that the candidate and the candidate's campaign do not possess an electronic mail address. Except for affidavits of candidacy for (1) judicial office, (2) the office of county attorney, or (3) county sheriff, an affidavit must also state the candidate's current address of residence as determined under section 200.031, or at the candidate's request in accordance with paragraph (c), the candidate's campaign contact address. When filing the affidavit, the candidate must present the filing officer with the candidate's valid driver's license or state identification card that contains the candidate's current address of residence, or documentation of proof of residence authorized for election day registration in section 201.061, subdivision 3, paragraph (a), clause (2); clause (3), item (ii); or paragraph (d). If an original bill is shown, the due date on the bill must be within 30 days before or after the beginning of the filing period or, for bills without a due date, dated within 30 days before the beginning of the filing period. If the address on the affidavit and the documentation do not match, the filing officer must not accept the affidavit. The form for the affidavit of candidacy must allow the candidate to request, if eligible, that the candidate's address of residence be classified as private data, and to provide the certification required under paragraph (c) for classification of that address.

(b) If an affidavit for an office where a residency requirement must be satisfied by the close of the filing period is filed as provided by paragraph (c), the filing officer must, within one business day of receiving the filing, determine whether the address provided in the affidavit of candidacy is within the area represented by the office the candidate is seeking. For all other candidates who filed for an office whose residency requirement must be satisfied by the close of the filing period, a registered voter in this state may request in writing that the filing officer receiving the affidavit of candidacy review the address as provided in this paragraph, at any time up to one day after the last day for filing for office. If requested, the filing officer must determine whether the address provided in the affidavit of candidacy is within the area represented by the office the candidate is seeking. If the filing officer determines that the address is not within the area represented by the office, the filing officer must immediately notify the candidate and the candidate's name must be removed from the ballot for that office. A determination made by a filing officer under this paragraph is subject to judicial review under section 204B.44.

(c) If the candidate requests that the candidate's address of residence be classified as private data, the candidate must list the candidate's address of residence on a separate form to be attached to the affidavit. The candidate must also certify on the affidavit that either: (1) a police report has been submitted, an order for protection has been issued, or the candidate has a reasonable fear in regard to the safety of the candidate or the candidate's family; or (2) the candidate's address is otherwise private pursuant to Minnesota law. The address of residence provided by a candidate who makes a request for classification on the candidate's affidavit of candidacy and provides the certification required by this paragraph is classified as private data, as defined in section 13.02, subdivision 12, but may be reviewed by the filing officer as provided in this subdivision.

~~(d) The requirements of this subdivision do not apply to affidavits of candidacy for a candidate for: (1) judicial office; (2) the office of county attorney; or (3) county sheriff.~~

Sec. 13. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.09, subdivision 1a, is amended to read:

Subd. 1a. **Absent candidates.** (a) A candidate for special district, county, state, or federal office who will be absent from the state during the filing period may submit a properly executed affidavit of candidacy, the appropriate filing fee, and any necessary petitions in person to the filing officer. The candidate shall state in writing the reason for being unable to submit the affidavit during the filing period. The affidavit, filing fee, if any, and petitions must be submitted to the filing officer during the seven days immediately preceding the

candidate's absence from the state. Nominating petitions may be signed during the 14 days immediately preceding the date when the affidavit of candidacy is filed.

(b) A candidate for special district, county, state, or federal office who will be absent from the state during the entire filing period or who must leave the state for the remainder of the filing period and who certifies to the secretary of state that the circumstances constitute an emergency and were unforeseen, may submit a properly executed affidavit of candidacy by facsimile device or by transmitting electronically a scanned image of the affidavit and proof of residence required in section 204B.06, subdivision 1b, to the secretary of state during the filing period. The candidate shall state in writing the specific reason for being unable to submit the affidavit by mail or by hand during the filing period or in person prior to the start of the filing period. The affidavit of candidacy, filing fee, if any, and any necessary petitions must be received by the secretary of state by 5:00 p.m. on the last day for filing. If the candidate is filing for a special district or county office, the secretary of state shall forward the affidavit of candidacy, filing fee, if any, and any necessary petitions to the appropriate filing officer. Copies of a proof of residence submitted under this subdivision are private data.

Sec. 14. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.09, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **Other elections.** Affidavits of candidacy and nominating petitions for city, town or other elective offices shall be filed during the time and with the official specified in chapter 205 or other applicable law or charter, except as provided for a special district candidate under subdivision 1a. Affidavits of candidacy and applications filed on behalf of eligible voters for school board office shall be filed during the time and with the official specified in chapter 205A or other applicable law. Affidavits of candidacy, including proof of residence required in section 204B.06, subdivision 1b, and nominating petitions filed under this subdivision must be submitted by mail or by hand, notwithstanding chapter 325L, or any other law to the contrary, and must be received by the appropriate official within the specified time for the filing of affidavits and petitions for the office. Copies of a proof of residence submitted by mail are private data.

Sec. 15. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.14, subdivision 4a, is amended to read:

Subd. 4a. **Municipal boundary adjustment procedure.** A change in the boundary of an election precinct that has occurred as a result of a municipal boundary adjustment made under chapter 414 that is effective more than ~~21~~ 46 days before a regularly scheduled election takes effect at the scheduled election.

A change in the boundary of an election precinct that has occurred as a result of a municipal boundary adjustment made under chapter 414 that is effective ~~less than 21~~ 46 or fewer days before a regularly scheduled election takes effect the day after the scheduled election.

Sec. 16. **[204B.182] CHAIN OF CUSTODY PLANS.**

(a) The county auditor must develop a county elections chain of custody plan to be used in all state, county, municipal, school district, and special district elections held in that county. If any of the political subdivisions cross county lines, the affected counties must make efforts to ensure that the elections chain of custody procedures affecting the local jurisdiction are uniform throughout the jurisdiction. County auditors must file the elections chain of custody plans with the secretary of state.

(b) The chain of custody plan must account for both the physical and cyber security of elections-related materials. The plan must include sample chain of custody documentation.

(c) The secretary of state may provide additional guidance to counties on elections chain of custody best practices and planning.

(d) A municipal clerk, school district clerk, or special district clerk may create a local chain of custody plan for use in local elections not held in conjunction with federal, state, or county elections that meets or exceeds the requirements of the county elections chain of custody plan. Any plan adopted under this paragraph must be adopted and filed with the secretary of state at least 84 days before the first election in which it will be used.

(e) Each political subdivision clerk who develops a local elections chain of custody plan pursuant to paragraph (d) and each county auditor must review their respective elections chain of custody plan prior to each state primary election. Any revisions to the elections chain of custody plan must be completed and filed with the secretary of state by June 1 prior to the state primary election.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment and county auditors must file an elections chain of custody plan with the secretary of state by September 1, 2025.

Sec. 17. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.21, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Appointment lists; duties of political parties and secretary of state.** (a) On ~~May~~ March 1 in a year in which there is an election for a partisan political office, each major political party ~~shall~~ must prepare a list of eligible voters who have indicated within

the last 24 months they are willing to act as election judges in each election precinct. The list provided by the party must indicate:

(1) which eligible voters are willing to travel to a precinct outside of their home jurisdiction to act as an election judge, and the jurisdictions to which each eligible voter is willing to travel for that purpose;

(2) which eligible voters are willing to serve on an absentee ballot board; and

(3) each eligible voter's residential address, telephone number, and email address, along with the date the eligible voter indicated their willingness to act as an election judge.

(b) The political parties ~~shall~~ must furnish the lists electronically to the secretary of state, in a format specified by the secretary of state. The secretary of state must combine the data received from each political party under this subdivision and must process the data to locate the precinct in which the address provided for each potential election judge is located. If the data submitted by a political party is insufficient for the secretary of state to locate the proper precinct or does not include the eligible voter's telephone number, email address, and date the eligible voter indicated their willingness to act as an election judge, the associated name must not appear in any list forwarded to an appointing authority under this subdivision. The secretary of state ~~shall~~ must notify political parties of any proposed election judges with addresses that could not be located in a precinct.

(c) By ~~May~~ March 15, the secretary of state ~~shall~~ must furnish electronically to the county auditor a list of the appropriate names for each election precinct and absentee ballot board in the jurisdiction of the appointing authority, and a list of the names of individuals residing outside of the jurisdiction who indicated a willingness to travel to that jurisdiction to act as an election judge, noting the political party affiliation of each individual on the list. The county auditor must promptly forward the appropriate names to the appropriate municipal clerk within seven days of receipt.

Sec. 18. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.21, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **Appointing authority; powers and duties.** (a) Election judges for precincts in a municipality ~~shall~~ must be appointed by the governing body of the municipality. Election judges for precincts in unorganized territory and for performing election-related duties assigned by the county auditor ~~shall~~ must be appointed by the county board. Election judges for a precinct composed of two or more municipalities must be appointed by the governing body of the municipality or municipalities responsible for appointing election judges as provided in the agreement to combine for election purposes. ~~Except as otherwise provided~~

~~in this section, appointments shall be made from~~ At least two election judges in each precinct and serving on the absentee ballot board must be affiliated with different major political parties. Election judges must meet all eligibility requirements and other qualifications established or authorized under section 204B.19.

(b) The appointing authority must first exhaust the list of voters who maintain residence in each precinct or, for appointment to an absentee ballot board, the list of voters who maintain residence in a jurisdiction covered by the absentee ballot board, furnished pursuant to subdivision 1~~, subject to the eligibility requirements and other qualifications established or authorized under section 204B.19. At least two election judges in each precinct must be affiliated with different major political parties. If no lists have been furnished or if additional election judges are required after all listed names in that municipality have been exhausted, the appointing authority may appoint other individuals who meet the qualifications to serve as an election judge, including persons on the list furnished pursuant to subdivision 1 who indicated a willingness to travel to the municipality, and persons who are not affiliated with a major political party.~~ before appointing other individuals who meet the qualifications to serve as an election judge. An appointing authority may exhaust the list furnished pursuant to subdivision 1 by:

(1) contacting once each person who appears on the list;

(2) identifying the opportunities available for the person to serve as an election judge;

(3) including the qualifications necessary to serve as an election judge, information about the required training, and the dates and times at which the person must be available to perform those duties; and

(4) explaining how the person may apply for appointment as an election judge.

Any person on the list furnished pursuant to subdivision 1 who does not respond to the appointing authority within 14 days is deemed to have waived their interest in appointment to any election judge position.

(c) An individual who is appointed from a source other than the list furnished pursuant to subdivision 1 must provide to the appointing authority the individual's major political party affiliation or a statement that the individual does not affiliate with any major political party. An individual who refuses to provide the individual's major political party affiliation or a statement that the individual does not affiliate with a major political party must not be appointed as an election judge. The appointments ~~shall~~ must be made at least 25 days before the election at which the election judges will serve, except that the appointing authority may pass a resolution authorizing the appointment of additional election judges within the

25 days before the election if the appointing authority determines that additional election judges will be required.

Sec. 19. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.24, is amended to read:

204B.24 ELECTION JUDGES; OATH.

Each election judge shall sign the following oath before assuming the duties of the office:

"I ..... solemnly swear (or affirm) that:

(1) I will perform the duties of election judge according to law and the best of my ability and will diligently endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse in conducting this election.

(2) I will perform my duties in a fair and impartial manner and not attempt to create an advantage for my party or for any candidate.

(3) In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 211B.075, I will not share information about voting that I know to be materially false and will not intentionally hinder, interfere with, or prevent a person from voting, registering to vote, or aiding another person in casting a ballot or registering to vote, except as specifically required by law."

The oath shall be attached to the summary statement of the election returns of that precinct. If there is no individual present who is authorized to administer oaths, the election judges may administer the oath to each other.

Sec. 20. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.25, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Trained election judges; number required.** Each election precinct in which less than 100 individuals voted at the last state general election shall have at least two election judges who are members of different major political parties who have received training as required in this section. ~~In every other election precinct,~~ No individual may serve as an election judge who has not received training as required by subdivision 1.

Sec. 21. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.44, is amended to read:

204B.44 ERRORS AND OMISSIONS; REMEDY.

(a) Any individual may file a petition in the manner provided in this section for the correction of any of the following errors, omissions, or wrongful acts which have occurred or are about to occur:

(1) an error or omission in the placement or printing of the name or description of any candidate or any question on any official ballot, including the placement of a candidate on the official ballot who is not eligible to hold the office for which the candidate has filed;

(2) any other error in preparing or printing any official ballot;

(3) failure of the chair or secretary of the proper committee of a major political party to execute or file a certificate of nomination;

(4) any wrongful act, omission, or error of any election judge, municipal clerk, county auditor, canvassing board or any of its members, the secretary of state, or any other individual charged with any duty concerning an election.

(b) The petition shall describe the error, omission, or wrongful act and the correction sought by the petitioner. The petition shall be filed with any judge of the supreme court in the case of an election for state or federal office or any judge of the district court in that county in the case of an election for county, municipal, or school district office. The petitioner shall serve a copy of the petition on the officer, board or individual charged with the error, omission, or wrongful act, on all candidates for the office in the case of an election for state, federal, county, municipal, or school district office, and on any other party as required by the court. Upon receipt of the petition the court shall immediately set a time for a hearing on the matter and order the officer, board or individual charged with the error, omission or wrongful act to correct the error or wrongful act or perform the duty or show cause for not doing so. In the case of a review of a candidate's eligibility to hold office, the court may order the candidate to appear and present sufficient evidence of the candidate's eligibility. The court shall issue its findings and a final order for appropriate relief as soon as possible after the hearing. Failure to obey the order is contempt of court.

(c) Any service required on a candidate may be accomplished by electronic mail sent to the address the candidate provided on their affidavit of candidacy pursuant to section 204B.06, subdivision 1b, or by any other means permitted by law.

(d) If the candidate for an office and the officer, board, or individual charged with the error, omission, or wrongful act unanimously agree in writing:

(1) that an error, omission, or wrongful act occurred; and

(2) on the appropriate correction for the error, omission, or wrongful act,

then the officer, board, or individual charged with the error, omission, or wrongful act must correct the error in the manner agreed to without an order from the court.

The officer, board, or individual must notify the secretary of state in writing of the error and proposed correction within one business day of receiving notification of the candidate's written agreement and must not distribute any ballots reflecting the proposed correction for two business days unless the secretary of state waives this notice period.

(e) Any candidate for an office who does not enter into an agreement under paragraph (d) and who does not prevail at any subsequent proceeding involving a petition filed under this section must pay the costs and disbursements of the prevailing party or parties unless the court determines that the candidate's position was substantially justified or such costs and disbursements would impose undue hardship or otherwise be inequitable.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an official may correct any official ballot without order from the court if the ballot is not in compliance with sections 204B.35 to 204B.37 or any rules promulgated under sections 204B.35 to 204B.37.

Sec. 22. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204B.45, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **Procedure; voting prior to election day.** Notice of the election and the special mail procedure must be given at least ten weeks prior to the election. Not more than 46 days nor later than ~~14~~ 28 days before ~~a regularly scheduled~~ any election ~~and not more than 30 days nor later than 14 days before any other election~~, the auditor shall mail ballots by nonforwardable mail to all voters registered in the city, town, or unorganized territory. No later than 14 days before the election, the auditor must make a subsequent mailing of ballots to those voters who register to vote after the initial mailing but before the 20th day before the election. Eligible voters not registered at the time the ballots are mailed may apply for ballots as provided in chapter 203B. Ballot return envelopes, with return postage provided, must be preaddressed to the auditor or clerk and the voter may return the ballot by mail or in person to the office of the auditor or clerk. The auditor or clerk must appoint a ballot board to examine the mail and absentee ballot return envelopes and mark them "accepted" or "rejected" within three days of receipt if there are 14 or fewer days before election day, or within five days of receipt if there are more than 14 days before election day. The board may consist of deputy county auditors or deputy municipal clerks who have received training in the processing and counting of mail ballots, who need not be affiliated with a major political party. Election judges performing the duties in this section must be of different major political parties, unless they are exempt from that requirement under section 205.075, subdivision 4, or section 205A.10. If an envelope has been rejected at least five days before the election, the ballots in the envelope must remain sealed and the auditor or clerk shall provide the voter with a replacement ballot and return envelope in place of the spoiled ballot.

If the ballot is rejected within five days of the election, the envelope must remain sealed and the official in charge of the ballot board must attempt to contact the voter by telephone or email to notify the voter that the voter's ballot has been rejected. The official must document the attempts made to contact the voter.

If the ballot is accepted, the county auditor or municipal clerk must mark the roster to indicate that the voter has already cast a ballot in that election. After the close of business on the 19th day before the election, the ballots from return envelopes marked "Accepted" may be opened, duplicated as needed in the manner provided by section 206.86, subdivision 5, initialed by the members of the ballot board, and deposited in the ballot box.

In all other respects, the provisions of the Minnesota Election Law governing deposit and counting of ballots apply.

The mail and absentee ballots for a precinct must be counted together and reported as one vote total. No vote totals from mail or absentee ballots may be made public before the close of voting on election day.

The costs of the mailing shall be paid by the election jurisdiction in which the voter maintains residence. Any ballot received by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election must be counted.

Sec. 23. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204C.08, subdivision 1d, is amended to read:

Subd. 1d. **Voter's Bill of Rights.** The county auditor shall prepare and provide to each polling place sufficient copies of a poster setting forth the Voter's Bill of Rights as set forth in this section. Before the hours of voting are scheduled to begin, the election judges shall post it in a conspicuous location or locations in the polling place. The Voter's Bill of Rights is as follows:

"VOTER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

For all persons residing in this state who meet federal voting eligibility requirements:

(1) You have the right to be absent from work for the purpose of voting in a state, federal, or regularly scheduled election without reduction to your pay, personal leave, or vacation time on election day for the time necessary to appear at your polling place, cast a ballot, and return to work.

(2) If you are in line at your polling place any time before 8:00 p.m., you have the right to vote.

(3) If you can provide the required proof of residence, you have the right to register to vote and to vote on election day.

(4) If you are unable to sign your name, you have the right to orally confirm your identity with an election judge and to direct another person to sign your name for you.

(5) You have the right to request special assistance when voting.

(6) If you need assistance, you may be accompanied into the voting booth by a person of your choice, except by an agent of your employer or union ~~or a candidate~~.

(7) You have the right to bring your minor children into the polling place and into the voting booth with you.

(8) You have the right to vote if you are not currently incarcerated for conviction of a felony offense.

(9) If you are under a guardianship, you have the right to vote, unless the court order revokes your right to vote.

(10) You have the right to vote without anyone in the polling place trying to influence your vote.

(11) If you make a mistake or spoil your ballot before it is submitted, you have the right to receive a replacement ballot and vote.

(12) You have the right to file a written complaint at your polling place if you are dissatisfied with the way an election is being run.

(13) You have the right to take a sample ballot into the voting booth with you.

(14) You have the right to take a copy of this Voter's Bill of Rights into the voting booth with you."

Sec. 24. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204C.09, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **Counting and initialing.** (a) Before the voting begins, at least two election judges must certify the number of ballots delivered to the precinct. Election judges may conduct this count, presuming that the total count provided for prepackaged ballots is correct. As each package is opened, two judges must count the ballots in the package to ensure that the total count provided for the package is correct. Any discrepancy must be noted on the incident log.

(b) Before the voting begins, or as soon as possible after it begins, at least two election judges shall each initial ~~the backs of~~ all the ballots. The election judges shall not otherwise mark the ballots.

Sec. 25. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 204C.10, is amended to read:

204C.10 POLLING PLACE ROSTER; VOTER SIGNATURE CERTIFICATE; VOTER RECEIPT.

(a) An individual seeking to vote shall sign a polling place roster or voter signature certificate which states that the individual:

(1) is at least 18 years old;

(2) is a citizen of the United States;

(3) has maintained residence in Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding the election;

(4) maintains residence at the address or location shown;

(5) is not under a guardianship in which the court order revokes the individual's right to vote;

(6) has not been found by a court of law to be legally incompetent to vote;

(7) has the right to vote because, if the individual was convicted of a felony, the individual is not currently incarcerated for that conviction;

(8) is registered; and

(9) has not already voted in the election.

The roster must also state: "I understand that deliberately providing false information is a felony punishable by not more than five years imprisonment and a fine of not more than $10,000, or both."

(b) At the presidential nomination primary, the polling place roster must also state: "I am in general agreement with the principles of the party for whose candidate I intend to vote." This statement must appear separately from the statements required in paragraph (a). The felony penalty provided for in paragraph (a) does not apply to this paragraph.

(c) A judge may, before the applicant signs the roster or voter signature certificate, confirm the applicant's name, address, and date of birth.

(d) After the applicant signs the roster or voter signature certificate, the judge shall give the applicant a voter's receipt. The voter shall deliver the voter's receipt to the judge in

charge of ballots as proof of the voter's right to vote, and thereupon the judge shall hand to the voter the ballot. The voters' receipts must be maintained during the time for notice of filing an election contest.

(e) Whenever a challenged status appears on the polling place roster, an election judge must ensure that the challenge is concealed or hidden from the view of any voter other than the voter whose status is challenged.

Sec. 26. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 205.185, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Canvass of returns, certificate of election, ballots, disposition.** (a) Between the ~~third~~ eighth and ~~tenth~~ 14th days after an election, the governing body of a city conducting any election including a special municipal election, or the governing body of a town conducting the general election in November shall act as the canvassing board, canvass the returns, and declare the candidate duly elected who received the highest number of votes for municipal office and the results of ~~the election~~ any ballot questions. The governing body of a town conducting the general election in March shall act as the canvassing board, canvass the returns, and shall declare the candidate duly elected who received the highest number of votes for each town office and the results of ~~the election~~ any ballot question within two days after an election.

(b) After the time for contesting elections has passed, the municipal clerk shall issue a certificate of election to each successful candidate. In case of a contest, the certificate shall not be issued until the outcome of the contest has been determined by the proper court.

(c) In case of a tie vote, the canvassing board having jurisdiction over the municipality shall determine the result by lot. The clerk of the canvassing board shall certify the results of the election to the county auditor, and the clerk shall be the final custodian of the ballots and the returns of the election.

Sec. 27. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 205A.10, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Canvass of returns, certificate of election, ballots, disposition.** Between the ~~third~~ eighth and ~~tenth~~ 14th days after a school district election other than a recount of a special election conducted under section 126C.17, subdivision 9, or 475.59, the school board shall canvass the returns and declare the candidate duly elected who received the highest number of votes for school district office and the results of ~~the election~~ any ballot question. After the time for contesting elections has passed, the school district clerk shall issue a certificate of election to each successful candidate. If there is a contest, the certificate of election to that office must not be issued until the outcome of the contest has been determined

by the proper court. If there is a tie vote, the school board shall determine the result by lot. The clerk shall deliver the certificate of election to the successful candidate by personal service or certified mail. The successful candidate shall file an acceptance and oath of office in writing with the clerk within 30 days of the date of mailing or personal service. A person who fails to qualify prior to the time specified shall be deemed to have refused to serve, but that filing may be made at any time before action to fill the vacancy has been taken. The school district clerk shall certify the results of the election to the county auditor, and the clerk shall be the final custodian of the ballots and the returns of the election.

A school district canvassing board shall perform the duties of the school board according to the requirements of this subdivision for a recount of a special election conducted under section 126C.17, subdivision 9, or 475.59.

Sec. 28. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 205A.11, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **Combined polling place.** (a) When no other election is being held in a school district, the school board may designate combined polling places at which the voters in those precincts may vote in the school district election.

(b) By December 31 of each year, the school board must designate, by resolution, any changes to combined polling places. The combined polling places designated in the resolution are the polling places, unless a change is made in accordance with this paragraph or:

(1) pursuant to section 204B.175; or

(2) because a polling place has become unavailable.

(c) If the school board designates combined polling places pursuant to this subdivision, polling places must be designated throughout the district, taking into account both geographical distribution and population distribution. A combined polling place must be at a location designated for use as a polling place by a county or municipality, except as provided in this paragraph. If the municipality conducts elections by mail balloting pursuant to section 204B.45, the school board may designate a polling place not used by the municipality if the polling place satisfies the requirements in section 204B.16, subdivisions 4 to 7.

(d) In school districts that have organized into separate board member election districts under section 205A.12, a combined polling place for a school general election must be arranged so that it does not include more than one board member election district.

Sec. 29. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 368.47, is amended to read:

368.47 TOWNS MAY BE DISSOLVED.

(1) When the voters residing within a town have failed to elect any town officials for more than ten years continuously;

(2) when a town has failed for a period of ten years to exercise any of the powers and functions of a town;

(3) when the estimated market value of a town drops to less than $165,000;

(4) when the tax delinquency of a town, exclusive of taxes that are delinquent or unpaid because they are contested in proceedings for the enforcement of taxes, amounts to 12 percent of its market value; or

(5) when the state or federal government has acquired title to 50 percent of the real estate of a town,

which facts, or any of them, may be found and determined by the resolution of the county board of the county in which the town is located, according to the official records in the office of the county auditor, the county board by resolution may declare the town, naming it, dissolved and no longer entitled to exercise any of the powers or functions of a town.

In Cass, Itasca, and St. Louis Counties, before the dissolution is effective the voters of the town shall express their approval or disapproval. The town clerk shall, upon a petition signed by a majority of the registered voters of the town, filed with the clerk at least ~~60~~ 84 days before a regular or special town election, give notice at the same time and in the same manner of the election that the question of dissolution of the town will be submitted for determination at the election. ~~At the election the question shall be voted upon by a separate ballot.~~ The form of the question under this chapter shall be substantially in the following form: "Shall the town of ... be dissolved?" ~~The ballot shall be deposited in a separate ballot box and~~ The result of the voting canvassed, certified, and returned in the same manner and at the same time as other facts and returns of the election. If a majority of the votes cast at the election are for dissolution, the town shall be dissolved. If a majority of the votes cast at the election are against dissolution, the town shall not be dissolved.

When a town is dissolved under sections 368.47 to 368.49 the county shall acquire title to any telephone company or other business conducted by the town. The business shall be operated by the board of county commissioners until it can be sold. The subscribers or patrons of the business shall have the first opportunity of purchase. If the town has any outstanding indebtedness chargeable to the business, the county auditor shall levy a tax

against the property situated in the dissolved town to pay the indebtedness as it becomes due.

Sec. 30. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 375.20, is amended to read:

375.20 BALLOT QUESTIONS.

If the county board may do an act, incur a debt, appropriate money for a purpose, or exercise any other power or authority, only if authorized by a vote of the people, the question may be submitted at a special or general election, by a resolution specifying the matter or question to be voted upon. If the question is to authorize the appropriation of money, creation of a debt, or levy of a tax, it shall state the amount. Notice of the election shall be given as in the case of special elections. If the question submitted is adopted, the board shall pass an appropriate resolution to carry it into effect. In the election the form of the ballot shall be: "Shall (here state the substance of the resolution to be submitted)?, Yes ..... No.....,". The county board may call a special county election upon a question to be held within ~~74~~ 84 days after a resolution to that effect is adopted by the county board. Upon the adoption of the resolution the county auditor shall post and publish notices of the election, as required by section 204D.22, subdivisions 2 and 3. The election shall be conducted and the returns canvassed in the manner prescribed by sections 204D.20 to 204D.27, so far as practicable.

Sec. 31. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 414.09, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **Elections of municipal officers.** (a) An order approving an incorporation or consolidation pursuant to this chapter, or an order requiring an election under section 414.031, subdivision 4a, shall set a date for an election of new municipal officers ~~not less than 45 days nor more than 60 days after the issuance of such order~~ in accordance with the uniform election dates defined in section 205.10, subdivision 3a.

(b) The chief administrative law judge shall appoint an acting clerk for election purposes, at least three election judges who shall be residents of the new municipality, and shall designate polling places within the new municipality.

(c) The acting clerk shall prepare the official election ballot pursuant to section 205.17.

(d) Any person eligible to hold municipal office may file an affidavit of candidacy ~~not more than four weeks nor less than two weeks before the date designated in the order for the election~~ pursuant to section 205.13.

(e) The election shall be conducted in conformity with the charter and the laws for conducting municipal elections insofar as applicable.

(f) Any person eligible to vote at a township or municipal election within the area of the new municipality, is eligible to vote at such election.

(g) Any excess in the expense of conducting the election over receipts from filing fees shall be a charge against the new municipality; any excess of receipts shall be deposited in the treasury of the new municipality.

Sec. 32. Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 447.32, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

Subd. 4. **Candidates; ballots; certifying election.** (a) A person who wants to be a candidate for the hospital board shall file an affidavit of candidacy for the election either as member at large or as a member representing the city or town where the candidate maintains residence. The affidavit of candidacy must be filed with the city or town clerk not more than 98 days nor less than 84 days before the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of the year in which the general election is held. The city or town clerk must forward the affidavits of candidacy to the clerk of the hospital district or, for the first election, the clerk of the most populous city or town immediately after the last day of the filing period. A candidate may withdraw from the election by filing an affidavit of withdrawal with the clerk of the district no later than 5:00 p.m. two days after the last day to file affidavits of candidacy.

(b) Between the eighth and 14th days after an election, the board must act as the canvassing board, canvass the returns, and declare the candidate duly elected who received the highest number of votes for hospital district office and the results of any ballot questions.

(c) Voting must be by secret ballot. The clerk shall prepare, at the expense of the district, necessary ballots for the election of officers. Ballots must be prepared as provided in the rules of the secretary of state. The ballots must be marked and initialed by at least two judges as official ballots and used exclusively at the election. Any proposition to be voted on may be printed on the ballot provided for the election of officers. The hospital board may also authorize the use of voting systems subject to chapter 206. Enough election judges may be appointed to receive the votes at each polling place. The election judges shall act as clerks of election, count the ballots cast, and submit them to the board for canvass.

(d) After canvassing the election, the board shall issue a certificate of election to the candidate who received the largest number of votes cast for each office. The clerk shall deliver the certificate to the person entitled to it in person or by certified mail. Each person certified shall file an acceptance and oath of office in writing with the clerk within 30 days after the date of delivery or mailing of the certificate. The board may fill any office as

provided in subdivision 1 if the person elected fails to qualify within 30 days, but qualification is effective if made before the board acts to fill the vacancy.

Sec. 33. **VOTING EQUIPMENT GRANT ACCOUNT; TRANSFER.**

Any balance remaining in the voting equipment grant account established under Minnesota Statutes, section 206.95, on the effective date of this section is transferred to the voting operations, technology, and election resources account established under Minnesota Statutes, section 5.305.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.

Sec. 34. **REPEALER.**

Minnesota Statutes 2024, sections 206.95; and 209.06, are repealed.

206.95 VOTING EQUIPMENT GRANT ACCOUNT.

Subdivision 1. **Voting equipment grant account.** A voting equipment grant account is established in the special revenue fund. Funds in the account are appropriated to the secretary of state to provide grants to political subdivisions as authorized by this section. Funds in the account are available until expended.

Subd. 2. **Authorized equipment.** A political subdivision may apply to receive a grant under this section for the purchase or lease of the following:

(1) an electronic voting system, or any individual components of an electronic voting system as provided in section 206.56, subdivision 8;

(2) assistive voting technology;

(3) an electronic roster system meeting the technology requirements of section 201.225, subdivision 2; and

(4) any other equipment or technology approved by the secretary of state for use in conducting a state or local election in Minnesota consistent with the requirements of law.

Subd. 3. **Application.** (a) The secretary of state may make a grant from the account to a political subdivision only after receiving an application from the political subdivision. The application must contain the following information:

(1) the date the application is submitted;

(2) the name of the political subdivision;

(3) the name and title of the individual who prepared the application;

(4) the type of voting system currently used in each precinct in the political subdivision;

(5) the date the system currently used was acquired and at what cost;

(6) the total number of registered voters, as of the date of the application, in each precinct in the political subdivision;

(7) the total amount of the grant requested;

(8) the total amount and source of the political subdivision's money to be used to match a grant from the account;

(9) the type of voting system to be acquired with the grant money and whether the voting system will permit individuals with disabilities to cast a secret ballot;

(10) the proposed schedule for purchasing and implementing the new voting system and the precincts in which the new voting system would be used;

(11) whether the political subdivision has previously applied for a grant from the account and the disposition of that application;

(12) a certified statement by the political subdivision that the grant will be used only to purchase authorized equipment under subdivision 2 and that the political subdivision has insufficient resources to purchase the voting system without obtaining a grant from the account; and

(13) any other information required by the secretary of state.

(b) The secretary of state must establish a deadline for receipt of grant applications, a procedure for awarding and distributing grants, and a process for verifying the proper use of the grants after distribution.

Subd. 4. **Amount of grant.** A political subdivision is eligible to receive a grant of no more than 75 percent of the total cost of electronic roster equipment and 50 percent of the total cost of all other equipment or technology authorized for a grant under subdivision 2. In evaluating the application, the secretary of state shall consider only the information set forth in the application and is not subject to chapter 14. If the secretary of state determines that the application has been fully and properly completed, and that there is a sufficient balance in the account to fund the grant, either in whole or in part, the secretary of state may approve the application.

Subd. 5. **Report to legislature.** No later than January 15, 2018, and annually thereafter until the appropriations provided for grants under this section have been exhausted, the secretary of state must submit a report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over elections policy on grants

awarded by this section. The report must detail each grant awarded, including the jurisdiction, the amount of the grant, and the type of equipment purchased.

209.06 INSPECTION OF BALLOTS.

Subdivision 1. **Appointment of inspectors.** After a contest has been instituted, either party may have the ballots inspected before preparing for trial. The party requesting an inspection shall file with the district court where the contest is brought a verified petition, stating that the case cannot properly be prepared for trial without an inspection of the ballots and designating the precincts in which an inspection is desired. A judge of the court in which the contest is pending shall then appoint as many sets of three inspectors for a contest of any office or question as are needed to count and inspect the ballots expeditiously. One inspector must be selected by each of the parties to the contest and a third must be chosen by those two inspectors. If either party neglects or refuses to name an inspector, the judge shall appoint the inspector. The compensation of inspectors is the same as for referees, unless otherwise stipulated.

Subd. 2. **Bond, taxing of costs.** The party applying for the inspection shall file with the court administrator of district court a bond in the sum of $250 if the contest is in a single county. In other cases the bond shall be in a sum set by the court with sureties approved by the court, and conditioned that the party seeking inspection will pay the administrative costs and expenses of the inspection if that party loses the contest.

Subd. 3. **Report of inspectors.** An inspection must be made in the office and in the presence of the legal custodian of the ballots. The inspectors shall recanvass the votes cast for the parties to the contest or the question in issue in accordance with the rules for counting ballots in the Minnesota Election Law. They shall make a written report of the inspection indicating the number of votes cast for each candidate or each side of the question in each precinct where the ballots were inspected and indicating any disputed ballots upon which the inspectors cannot agree.