

A bill for an act

relating to elections; exempting certain towns from a voting system requirement in certain situations; amending Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 206.57, by adding a subdivision; Minnesota Statutes 2007 Supplement, section 206.57, subdivision 5.

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

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2007 Supplement, section 206.57, subdivision 5, is amended to read:

Subd. 5. **Voting system for disabled voters.** In federal and state elections held after December 31, 2005; in county, city, and school district elections held after December 31, 2007; and, except as provided in subdivision 5a, in township elections held after December 31, 2009, the voting method used in each polling place must include a voting system that is accessible for individuals with disabilities, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, as for other voters.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2006, section 206.57, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 5a. **Limited town exemptions.** A town conducting an election not held in conjunction with any federal, state, county, or school district election is exempt from the requirements of subdivision 5 if the town has fewer than 500 registered voters as determined by the secretary of state by June 1 of each year.

A town that would otherwise satisfy the requirements of this subdivision is still required to comply with subdivision 5 at its next general town election if the voters at the

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2.1 preceding year's annual town meeting instruct the town to conduct elections in compliance
2.2 with subdivision 5.

2.3 Beginning in 2009 and at least once every other year until 2016, the secretary of
2.4 state shall convene an advisory group to review changes in state contracts related to
2.5 voting equipment and software, equipment options, and other options that may make
2.6 full compliance with subdivision 5 viable for town elections. The advisory group shall
2.7 monitor costs of compliance for all townships to determine whether the costs constitute
2.8 an excessive burden and examine ways that costs may be reduced. The advisory group
2.9 shall consist of representatives of the legislature, the Office of the Secretary of State, town
2.10 officers, county election officials, the National Federation of the Blind, the Minnesota
2.11 State Council on Disability, the disability law center, and other interested parties.