

## CHAPTER 471 — S.F.No. 1546

*An act relating to elections; improving the accessibility of the election process to certain elderly and handicapped persons; amending Minnesota Statutes 1982, sections 201.071, subdivision 2; 201.091, subdivision 8; 203B.07; 204B.17; 204B.18, subdivision 1; 204B.27, subdivisions 3 and 4; 204C.06, subdivision 2; 204C.15, subdivision 1 and by adding a subdivision; 206.19, subdivision 2; 206.20; and Minnesota Statutes 1983 Supplement, sections 203B.02, subdivision 1; 204B.16; and 206.09; proposing new law coded in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 206.*

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

Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 201.071, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **INSTRUCTIONS.** A registration card shall be accompanied by instructions specifying the manner and method of registration, the qualifications for voting, and the penalties for false registration, and the availability of registration and voting assistance for elderly and handicapped individuals and residents of health care facilities and hospitals. If, prior to election day, a person requests the instructions in Braille, on cassette tape, or in a version printed in 16-point bold type with heavy leading, the county auditor shall provide them in the form requested. The secretary of state shall prepare Braille and cassette copies and make them available.

Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 201.091, subdivision 8, is amended to read:

Subd. 8. **REGISTRATION PLACES.** Each county auditor shall designate a number of public buildings in those political subdivisions of the county where preregistration of voters is allowed as provided in section 201.061, subdivision 1, where eligible voters may register to vote. At least one public building shall be designated for each 30,000 residents of the political subdivision county. Every city of the first, second, and third class and county seat shall have at least one telecommunications device for the deaf for voter registration information.

An adequate supply of registration cards shall and instructions must be maintained at each designated location, and a designated individual shall must be available there to accept registration cards and transmit them to the county auditor.

A person who, because of handicap, needs assistance in order to determine eligibility or to register shall be assisted by a designated individual. Assistance includes but is not limited to reading the registration form and instructions and filling out the registration form as directed by the eligible voter.

Changes or additions are indicated by underline, deletions by ~~strikeout~~.

Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 1983 Supplement, section 203B.02, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **UNABLE TO GO TO POLLING PLACE.** Any eligible voter who reasonably anticipates he will 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, ~~physical~~ 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.

Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 203B.07, is amended to read:

**203B.07 RETURN AND BALLOT ENVELOPES; DIRECTIONS TO VOTERS.**

Subdivision 1. **DELIVERY OF ENVELOPES, DIRECTIONS.** The county auditor or the municipal clerk shall prepare, print, and transmit a return envelope, a ballot envelope, and a copy of the directions for casting an absentee ballot to each applicant whose application for absentee ballots is accepted pursuant to section 203B.04. The directions for casting an absentee ballot shall be printed in at least 14-point bold type with heavy leading. When a person requests the directions in Braille or on cassette tape, the county auditor or municipal clerk shall provide them in the form requested. The secretary of state shall prepare Braille and cassette copies and make them available.

When a voter registration card is sent to the applicant as provided in section 203B.06, subdivision 4, the directions or registration card shall include instructions for registering to vote.

Subd. 2. **DESIGN OF ENVELOPES.** The return envelope shall be of sufficient size to conveniently enclose and contain the ballot envelope and a voter registration card folded along its perforations. The return envelope shall be designed to open on the left hand end. A certificate of eligibility to vote by absentee ballot shall be printed on the right hand three-fourths of the back of the envelope. The certificate shall contain a statement to be signed and sworn by the voter indicating that the voter meets all of the requirements established by law for voting by absentee ballot. The certificate shall also contain a statement signed by an eligible voter of the county in which the absent voter maintains residence or by a notary public, United States postmaster, assistant postmaster, postal supervisor, clerk of a postal service contract station or other individual authorized to administer oaths stating that:

- (a) the ballots were displayed to that individual unmarked;
- (b) the voter marked the ballots in that individual's presence without showing how they were marked, or, if the voter was physically unable to mark them, that the voter directed another individual to mark them; and

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(c) if the voter was not previously registered, that the voter has provided proof of residence as required by section 201.061, subdivision 3.

The county auditor or municipal clerk shall affix first class postage to the return envelopes.

Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 1983 Supplement, section 204B.16, is amended to read:

**204B.16 POLLING PLACES; DESIGNATION.**

Subdivision 1. **AUTHORITY; LOCATION.** The governing body of each municipality and of each county with precincts in unorganized territory shall designate by ordinance or resolution a polling place for each election precinct. The polling place for a precinct in a municipality shall be located within the boundaries of the precinct or within 1500 feet of one of those boundaries unless a single polling place is designated for a city pursuant to subdivision 2. The polling place for a precinct may be located up to 3,000 feet outside one of the boundaries of the precinct if necessary to locate a polling place that is accessible to and usable by elderly and handicapped individuals as required in subdivision 5. The polling place for a precinct in unorganized territory may be located outside the precinct at a place which is convenient to the voters of the precinct.

Subd. 2. **SINGLE POLLING PLACE PERMITTED.** The governing body of any city of the third or fourth class having more than one precinct or of any city with territory in more than one county may by ordinance or resolution designate a single, accessible, centrally located polling place where all the voters of the city shall cast their ballots. A single board of election judges may be appointed to serve at this polling place. The number of election judges appointed shall be determined by considering the number of voters in the entire city as if they were voters in a single precinct. Separate ballot boxes shall be provided and separate returns made for each precinct in the city.

Subd. 3. **DESIGNATION EFFECTIVE UNTIL CHANGED.** The designation of a polling place pursuant to this section shall remain effective until a different polling place is designated for that precinct. No designation of a new or different polling place shall become effective less than 30 days prior to an election.

Subd. 4. **PROHIBITED LOCATIONS.** No polling place shall be designated in any place where intoxicating liquors or non-intoxicating malt beverages are served or in any adjoining room. No polling place shall be designated in any place in which substantial compliance with the requirements of this chapter cannot be attained.

Subd. 5. **ACCESS BY ELDERLY AND HANDICAPPED.** Each polling place shall be accessible to and usable by elderly and physically handicapped

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individuals. A polling place is deemed to be accessible and usable if it complies with the following standards: in paragraphs (a) to (f).

(a) At least one set of doors ~~shall~~ must have a minimum width of 31 inches if the doors must be used to enter or leave the polling place.

(b) Any curb adjacent to the main entrance to a polling place ~~shall~~ must have curb cuts or temporary ramps. Where the main entrance is not the accessible entrance, any curb adjacent to the accessible entrance must also have curb cuts or temporary ramps.

(c) Where the main entrance is not the accessible entrance, a sign shall be posted at the main entrance giving directions to the accessible entrance.

(e) (d) At least one set of stairs ~~shall~~ must have a temporary handrail and ramp if stairs must be used to enter or leave the polling place.

(d) (e) No barrier in the polling place ~~shall~~ may impede the path of the physically handicapped to the voting booth.

(f) At least one handicapped parking space, which may be temporarily so designated by the municipality for the day of the election, must be available near the accessible entrance.

The doorway, handrails, ramps, and handicapped parking provided pursuant to this subdivision must conform to the standards specified in the state building code for accessibility by handicapped persons.

A governing body shall designate as polling places only those places which meet the standards prescribed in this subdivision unless no available place within a precinct is accessible or can be made accessible.

Subd. 6. **PUBLIC FACILITIES.** Every statutory city, home rule charter city, county, town, school district, and other public agency, including the University of Minnesota and other public colleges and universities, shall make their facilities, including parking, available for the holding of city, county, state, and federal elections. A charge for the use of the facilities may be imposed in an amount that does not exceed the lowest amount charged to any public or private group.

Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204B.17, is amended to read:

**204B.17 CHANGE OF POLLING PLACE BY ELECTION JUDGES.**

When a designated polling place does not comply with the requirements of this chapter the election judges of that precinct, on or before the opening of the polls on election day and upon approval by the municipal clerk in municipalities or the county auditor in unorganized territory, shall procure a polling place which is as near the designated polling place as possible and which does comply with those requirements.

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When a new polling place is procured by the election judges, they shall meet on election day at the original polling place where they shall fill any vacancies in their number, publicly announce the change in polling place to the voters who are present and post a notice in large print of the change in a conspicuous place. They shall also post a notice in a location visible by voters who vote from their motor vehicles as provided in 204C.15, subdivision 2. Upon completing these duties the election judges shall adjourn to the new polling place, where they shall post a similar notice of the change in polling place. The election judges shall certify to the appropriate governing body the expenses incurred because of the change. These expenses shall be paid as part of the expenses of the election.

Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204B.18, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **BOOTHES.** Each polling place ~~shall~~ must contain a number of voting booths in proportion to the number of individuals eligible to vote in the precinct. Each booth ~~shall~~ must be at least six feet high, three feet deep and two feet wide with a shelf at least two feet long and one foot wide placed at a convenient height for writing. The booth shall be provided with a door or ~~curtain and shall~~ curtains. Each accessible polling place must have at least one accessible voting booth or other accessible voting station. All booths or stations must be constructed so that a voter is free from observation while marking ballots. In all other polling places every effort must be made to provide at least one accessible voting booth or other accessible voting station. During the hours of voting, the booths ~~shall~~ be provided with must have instructions, a pencil, and other supplies needed to mark the ballots. If needed, a chair must be provided for elderly and handicapped voters to use while in the voting booth. All ballot boxes, voting booths, and election judges ~~shall~~ must be in open public view in the polling place.

Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204B.27, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

Subd. 3. **INSTRUCTION POSTERS.** At least 15 days before every state election the secretary of state shall prepare and furnish to the county auditor of each county in which paper ballots are used, voter instruction posters printed in large type upon cards or heavy paper. The instruction posters ~~shall~~ must contain the information needed to enable the voters to cast their paper ballots quickly and correctly and indicate the types of assistance available for elderly and handicapped voters. Two instruction posters shall be furnished for each precinct in which paper ballots are used.

Sec. 9. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204B.27, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

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Subd. 4. **PAMPHLETS.** The secretary of state ~~may~~ shall prepare and distribute to election officials pamphlets for voters containing impartial instructions relating to voter registration and election procedures. The pamphlets must indicate the types of registration and voting assistance available for elderly and handicapped individuals and residents of health care facilities and hospitals.

Sec. 10. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204C.06, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. **INDIVIDUALS ALLOWED IN POLLING PLACE.** Representatives of the secretary of state's office, the county auditor's office, and the municipal clerk's office may be present at the polling place to observe election procedures. Except for these representatives, election judges, sergeants-at-arms, and challengers, an individual may remain inside the polling place during voting hours only while voting or registering to vote, providing proof of residence for an individual who is registering to vote, or assisting a ~~physically~~ handicapped voter or a voter who is unable to read English. During voting hours no one except individuals receiving, marking, or depositing ballots shall approach within six feet of a voting booth, unless lawfully authorized to do so by an election judge.

Sec. 11. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204C.15, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

Subdivision 1. **INTERPRETERS; PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE IN MARKING BALLOTS.** A voter who states under oath that he is in need of assistance because he cannot read English or is physically unable to mark a ballot may obtain the aid of two election judges who are members of different major political parties. The election judges shall mark the ballots as directed by the voter and in as secret a manner as circumstances permit. If the voter is deaf or cannot speak English or understand it when it is spoken, the election judges may select two individuals who are members of different major political parties to act as interpreters. The interpreters shall take an oath similar to that taken by election judges, and shall assist the individual in marking the ballots. A voter in need of assistance may alternatively obtain the assistance of a voter of the same precinct who any individual the voter chooses. The individual who assists the voter shall take an oath that he or she is eligible to do so. Only the following persons may not provide assistance to a voter: the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, an officer or agent of the voter's union, or a candidate for election. The person who assists the voter shall, unaccompanied by an election judge, ~~shall~~ retire with that voter to a booth and mark the ballot as directed by the voter. ~~No voter person~~ who assists another voter as provided in the preceding sentence shall mark the ballots of more than three voters at one election. Before the ballots are deposited, the voter may show them privately to an election judge to ascertain that they are marked as the voter directed. An election judge or other individual assisting a voter shall not in any manner request, persuade, induce, or attempt to persuade or induce the voter to vote for

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any particular political party or candidate. The election judges or other individuals who assist the voter shall not reveal to anyone the name of any candidate for whom the voter has voted or anything that took place while assisting the voter.

Sec. 12. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 204C.15, is amended by adding a subdivision to read:

Subd. 2a. LEVER MACHINE PRECINCTS. An individual who is unable to enter a polling place where a lever voting system is used may register and vote without leaving his motor vehicle. Two election judges who are members of different political parties shall assist the voter to register. They shall provide the voter with the necessary ballots, a ballot envelope and an absentee ballot return envelope, which shall be completed by the voter, returned to the election judge, and processed pursuant to section 203B.12.

An individual who is unable to enter a voting machine booth in a precinct where a lever voting system is used shall be provided with the necessary ballots, a ballot envelope, and an absentee ballot return envelope, which shall be completed by the voter and returned to the election judge and processed pursuant to section 203B.12.

Sec. 13. [206.065] **VOTING MACHINES, ACCESSIBILITY OF BALLOT.**

Items appearing on the ballot on a voting machine must be positioned as low as possible on the machine so that individuals not able to reach the voting levers at the top of the machine may vote to the greatest extent possible without assistance.

Sec. 14. Minnesota Statutes 1983 Supplement, section 206.09, is amended to read:

**206.09 BALLOT LABELS; DIAGRAMS FOR VOTING MACHINES.**

The same authorities as are charged with providing paper ballots when such are used shall be required to provide all ballots, ballot labels and ballot cards, diagrams, sample ballots, return sheets and all other necessary supplies needed for the voting machines or electronic voting systems.

In state and county general elections the county auditor of each county in which voting machines or electronic voting systems are used shall provide all ballots, ballot labels, ballot cards, and other necessary printed forms and supplies needed for the voting machines, including all such forms needed for placing on such voting machines, all officers, candidates and constitutional amendments and other questions and propositions which are required by the election laws to be placed on the white, pink, and canary ballots.

Except as herein provided all ballots (or ballot labels) shall be printed in black ink on clear white material of such size as will fit the ballot frame of the

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voting machine or as will conform to the requirements of electronic voting systems where used, and in as plain clear type as the space will reasonably permit. In primaries where electronic voting systems are used, the ballot pages for the partisan primary ballots may be different colors or may be otherwise distinctively differentiated as between parties and all pages of the partisan primary ballot of a single party shall be consecutive without the intervention of any pages of any other party. In a prominent place on such ballots there shall be conspicuously printed a notice stating in substance the effect of attempting to vote in more than one partisan primary. Preparation of separate ballots for use on separate marking devices, each ballot containing the partisan primary ballot of only one party, shall also be permitted. Candidates' names may be set in as large type as the length of the majority of such names of all candidates on the ballot permits and the remaining candidates' names may be set in such smaller sizes or styles of type as the length of each such name requires based upon the available space in the frame of the voting machine or upon the space available on any card, paper, booklet, or pages. Ballots (or ballot labels) for constitutional amendments or that portion of the ballot containing constitutional amendments shall be printed on material tinted pink. In a prominent place on such ballots, there shall be conspicuously printed a notice stating in substance that if a voter fails to vote on a constitutional amendment he votes, in effect, in the negative. Ballots (or ballot labels) for other questions shall be printed on material so tinted as to conform with the laws relating to paper ballots.

The authorities charged with the duty of providing ballots for any polling place where voting machines are used shall provide therefor at least two sample ballots which shall be arranged in the form of a diagram showing such part of the face of the voting machine as shall be in use at that election for voting for all candidates whose names are entitled to be placed on the ballot at such election and shall also show such part of the face of the voting machine as shall be in use for voting for all referendum questions, constitutional amendments, or other propositions; the proper authorities shall provide at least two sample ballots, ballot cards, or ballot labels which shall be arranged in the form of a diagram showing the ballot label containing the names of all candidates and propositions to be voted upon at that election in each polling place. Candidates' names shall not be rotated on such sample ballots but shall be arranged in alphabetical order for all offices where rotation of names on the official ballots on the voting machines is required by law. Such sample ballots shall be either in full or ~~reduced~~ enlarged size and shall contain suitable illustrated directions for voting on the voting machine, or for operating a marking device, or such illustrated instructions shall be provided on a separate poster, to be posted adjacent to each sample ballot. Not less than two such sample ballots shall be posted in a prominent place in the polling place and shall remain open to inspection by the voters throughout the election day. The instructions shall be printed in at least 14-point bold type with heavy leading.

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The county auditor may use a one inch or more space between partisan and nonpartisan ballots, but in all cases a canary yellow color shall be used as background color on the nonpartisan ballots.

Sec. 15. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 206.19, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

Subd. 2. The authorities in charge of elections shall provide adequate facilities for the instruction of voters prior to an election and cause to be placed in one or more convenient locations a voting machine with sample ballot labels affixed for the purpose of instructing voters in the operation of the machine. The facilities for the instruction of voters and the location of the voting machine so far as practicable shall be accessible to elderly and handicapped individuals. If the ballot labels that are used for this purpose are the same that will be used for the succeeding election the counting mechanism of the machine shall be concealed from view until the machine is prepared for the election and if the machine or machines are not used at the election the counting mechanism shall remain concealed from view until after the election.

Sec. 16. Minnesota Statutes 1982, section 206.20, is amended to read:

**206.20 ACCESSIBILITY; INSTRUCTIONS; ASSISTANCE TO VOTERS.**

Subdivision 1. The voting machine or machines shall be so placed and protected that each machine shall be accessible to only one voter at a time and in full view of all of the election officers and watchers at the polling place. An election judge shall inspect the face of each voting machine after each voter has voted to see that the ballot labels are in their proper places and that the machine has not been injured or tampered with. During elections the door or other compartment of the machine shall not be unlocked or opened or the counters exposed except by a custodian or other authorized person, a statement of which shall be made and signed by the custodian or authorized person and attached to the returns.

Subd. 2. For the instruction of the voters there shall be, so far as practicable in each polling place, at least one mechanical model being a mechanical reproduction of a portion of the face of the voting machine. The model shall be located during the election in some accessible place which the voter must pass to reach the machine. Every voter before entering the booth shall be instructed regarding its operation. The instruction shall be illustrated on the model and the voter given the opportunity to personally operate the model. The voter's attention shall also be called to the diagram of the face of the machine so that the voter becomes familiar with the location of the questions and the names of the offices and candidates. At least one election judge shall remain in constant attendance at the instruction model and diagram and occupy himself at all times with the duties of instructing the voters. If any voter after entering the voting

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machine booth asks for additional instruction in operating the machine the instruction shall be given him by two election judges who are members of different major political parties, if such there be. After giving instruction the election judges shall retire from the voting machine booth and the voter shall thereafter proceed to vote alone and in secrecy. If any voter at a primary after entering the voting machine booth and setting the primary lever of a major political party so as to release the candidates of that party for voting, and turning down levers over the names of candidates, but before recording the votes for any candidates, states to the election judges that he wishes to enter the primary of a different major political party, the entire election board shall go to the machine and shall see that all voting levers have been returned to the unvoted position so that no votes may be cast for any candidates or for or against any questions or other propositions, and the voter shall then be permitted to return the operating lever to its original position and start from the beginning once more. In each such case the entire election board shall sign a certificate stating what was done and the certificate shall be returned with the official returns of the primary.

Subd. 3. When any voter states under oath that he cannot read English, or that he is physically unable to operate the voting machine in order to record his vote thereon, he may call to his aid two of the election judges of different major political party affiliation, who shall prepare his ballot on the machine as he may desire, and in as secret a manner as circumstances permit. ~~When he also states that he~~ If the voter is deaf or cannot speak the English language or understand it when spoken, the election judges may select two persons from different major political parties to act as interpreters, who shall take an oath similar to that taken by the election judges, and assist such person in voting. ~~When the voter shall prefer~~ Alternatively, he the voter may call to his aid any voter of the same precinct, who obtain the assistance of any individual the voter chooses. The individual who assists the voter shall take an oath that he or she is eligible to do so. Only the following persons may not provide assistance to a voter: the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, an officer or agent of the voter's union, or a candidate for election. The person who assists the voter shall, unaccompanied by an election judge, may retire with him the voter to the voting machine booth and prepare such the voter's ballot on such the voting machine for him the voter; but no such person shall prepare the ballot of more than three such voters at one election. Before registering his vote such voter may show his ballot, as prepared for recording, privately to an election judge to ascertain that it is prepared as directed. No election judge or other person so assisting a voter shall in any manner request, persuade, or induce, or attempt to persuade such voter to vote for or against any particular major political party, candidate or question, but shall prepare the ballot as requested, and shall not reveal to any other person the name of any candidate for whom the voter has voted, or anything that took place while so assisting him.

Subd. 4. The election judges shall admit but one voter to the voting machine at one time and only after it has been ascertained that he is entitled to

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vote. The voting on the voting machine shall be secret except as herein provided for voters needing assistance and no voter shall remain within the voting machine booth longer than three minutes and if he shall refuse to leave it after the lapse of three minutes he shall be removed by the election judges. If necessitated by the length of the ballot or the handicap of the voter, election judges may allow a voter to remain in the voting booth longer than three minutes.

Subd. 5. If the official ballots at a precinct at which a voting machine is to be used are not delivered at the time required, or if after delivery they shall become lost, destroyed or stolen the election judges shall immediately notify the clerk or other authority under whose direction the ballots are printed who shall cause other ballots to be prepared, printed, or written as nearly in the form of the official ballot as practicable. The election judges shall cause such substituted ballots to be used in the same manner as the official ballots.

Subd. 6. Ballots cast for persons not nominated by the use of the machine device provided for that purpose shall be designated irregular ballots.

Subd. 7. If any voting machine being used in any election shall become out of order during such election it shall be repaired if possible or another machine substituted as promptly as possible. In case such substitution or repair cannot be made, paper ballots printed or written, and of any suitable form may be used for the taking of votes and for such purpose voting machine sample ballots may be used.

**Sec. 17. EFFECTIVE DATE; APPLICATION.**

Sections 1 to 16 are effective August 1, 1984, except that election materials printed before the effective date of sections 1 to 16 may be used until July 1, 1985.

Approved April 25, 1984

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**CHAPTER 472 — S.F.No. 1575**

*An act relating to commerce; providing for the computation of interest on mechanics' lien claims; delaying the effective date of a bill carried over from the 1983 to the 1984 regular session; proposing new law coded in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 514.*

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

**Section 1. [514.135] COMPUTATION OF INTEREST ON CLAIMS.**

Except as otherwise provided by contract, interest awarded on mechanics' lien claims shall be calculated at the legal rate, as provided in section 334.01, from the time the underlying obligation arises until the expiration of 30 days after

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