

## CHAPTER 204B

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**204B.001** MS 2006 [Renumbered 15.001]

**204B.01 DEFINITIONS.**

The definitions in chapter 200 apply to this chapter.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 1

**204B.02 APPLICATION.**

This chapter applies to all elections held in this state except as otherwise provided by law.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 2; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 23

**204B.03 MANNER OF NOMINATION.**

Candidates of a major political party for any partisan office except presidential elector and all candidates for nonpartisan office shall apply for a place on the primary ballot by filing an affidavit of candidacy as provided in section 204B.06, and except as otherwise provided in section 204D.07, subdivision 3, shall be nominated by primary. Candidates for any partisan office who do not seek the nomination of a major political party shall be nominated by nominating petition as provided in sections 204B.07 and 204B.08, and, except for presidential elector candidates, shall file an affidavit of candidacy as provided in section 204B.06.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 3; 1986 c 475 s 7

**204B.04 CANDIDACY; PROHIBITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Major party candidates.** No individual shall be named on any ballot as the candidate of more than one major political party. No individual who has been certified by a canvassing board as the nominee of any major political party shall be named on any ballot as the candidate of any other major political party at the next ensuing general election.

Subd. 2. **Candidates seeking nomination by primary.** No individual who seeks nomination for any partisan or nonpartisan office at a primary shall be nominated for the same office by nominating petition, except as otherwise provided for nonpartisan offices in section 204B.13, subdivision 4.

Subd. 2a. [Expired]

Subd. 3. **Nomination for nonpartisan office.** No individual shall be nominated by nominating petition for any nonpartisan office except in the event of a vacancy in nomination as provided in section 204B.13.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 4; 1991 c 320 s 4; 1996 c 419 s 4,5,10; 2010 c 201 s 22

**204B.05 [Repealed, 1987 c 39 s 1]****204B.06 FILING FOR PRIMARY; AFFIDAVIT OF CANDIDACY.**

Subdivision 1. **Form of affidavit.** An affidavit of candidacy shall state the name of the office sought and, except as provided in subdivision 4, shall state that the candidate:

(1) is an eligible voter;

(2) has no other affidavit on file as a candidate for any office at the same primary or next ensuing general election, except that a candidate for soil and water conservation district supervisor in a district not located in whole or in part in Anoka, Hennepin, Ramsey, or Washington County, may also have on file an affidavit of candidacy for mayor or council member of a statutory or home rule charter city of not more than 2,500 population contained in whole or in part in the soil

and water conservation district or for town supervisor in a town of not more than 2,500 population contained in whole or in part in the soil and water conservation district; and

(3) is, or will be on assuming the office, 21 years of age or more, and will have maintained residence in the district from which the candidate seeks election for 30 days before the general election.

An affidavit of candidacy must include a statement that the candidate's name as written on the affidavit for ballot designation is the candidate's true name or the name by which the candidate is commonly and generally known in the community.

An affidavit of candidacy for partisan office shall also state the name of the candidate's political party or political principle, stated in three words or less.

Subd. 1a. [Repealed, 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 44]

Subd. 1b. **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 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. 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) 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 a police report has been submitted or an order for protection has been issued in regard to the safety of the candidate or the candidate's family. 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.

Subd. 2. **Major party candidates.** A candidate who seeks the nomination of a major political party for a partisan office shall state on the affidavit of candidacy that the candidate either participated in that party's most recent precinct caucus or intends to vote for a majority of that party's candidates at the next ensuing general election.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1983 c 253 s 26]

Subd. 4. **Federal offices.** Candidates for president or vice president of the United States

are not required to file an affidavit of candidacy for office. Candidates who seek nomination for the office of United States senator or representative shall state the following information on the affidavit:

(1) for United States senator, that the candidate will be an inhabitant of this state when elected and will be 30 years of age or older and a citizen of the United States for not less than nine years on the next January 3 or, in the case of an election to fill a vacancy, within 21 days after the special election; and

(2) for United States representative, that the candidate will be an inhabitant of this state when elected and will be 25 years of age or older and a citizen of the United States for not less than seven years on the next January 3 or, in the case of an election to fill a vacancy, within 21 days after the special election.

Subd. 4a. **State and local offices.** Candidates who seek nomination for the following offices shall state the following additional information on the affidavit:

(1) for governor or lieutenant governor, that on the first Monday of the next January the candidate will be 25 years of age or older and, on the day of the state general election, a resident of Minnesota for not less than one year;

(2) for Supreme Court justice, Court of Appeals judge, or district court judge, that the candidate is learned in the law;

(3) for county, municipal, school district, or special district office, that the candidate meets any other qualifications for that office prescribed by law;

(4) for senator or representative in the legislature, that on the day of the general or special election to fill the office the candidate will have resided not less than one year in the state and not less than six months in the legislative district from which the candidate seeks election.

Subd. 5. **United States senator; two candidates at same election.** When two candidates are to be elected United States senators from this state at the same election, each individual filing for the nomination shall state in the affidavit of candidacy the term for which the individual desires to be a candidate, by stating the date of the expiration of the term.

Subd. 6. **Judicial candidates; designation of term.** An individual who files as a candidate for the office of chief justice or associate justice of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, or judge of the district court shall state in the affidavit of candidacy the office of the particular justice or judge for which the individual is a candidate. The individual shall be a candidate only for the office identified in the affidavit. Each justice of the Supreme Court and each Court of Appeals and district court judge is deemed to hold a separate nonpartisan office.

Subd. 7. **Governor and lieutenant governor.** An individual who files as a candidate for governor or lieutenant governor shall file the affidavit of candidacy jointly with the affidavit of another individual who seeks nomination as a candidate for the other office.

Subd. 8. **Proof of eligibility.** A candidate for judicial office or for the office of county attorney shall submit with the affidavit of candidacy proof that the candidate is licensed to practice law in this state. Proof means providing a copy of a current attorney license.

A candidate for county sheriff shall submit with the affidavit of candidacy proof of licensure as a peace officer in this state. Proof means providing a copy of a current Peace Officer Standards and Training Board license.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 6; 1982 c 501 s 14; 1983 c 247 s 83,84; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 475 s 8; 1990 c 603 s 2; 1993 c 223 s 7,8; 1995 c 222 s 2; 1996 c 419 s 6,10; 1997 c 147 s 26; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 16; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 14; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 31,32; 2008 c 244 art 2 s 16; 2010 c 314 s 2

#### **204B.07 NOMINATING PETITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Form of petition.** A nominating petition may consist of one or more separate pages each of which shall state:

- (a) the office sought;
- (b) the candidate's name and residence address, including street and number if any; and
- (c) the candidate's political party or political principle expressed in not more than three words. No candidate who files for a partisan office by nominating petition shall use the term "nonpartisan" as a statement of political principle or the name of the candidate's political party. No part of the name of a major political party may be used to designate the political party or principle of a candidate who files for a partisan office by nominating petition, except that the word "independent" may be used to designate the party or principle. A candidate who files by nominating petition to fill a vacancy in nomination for a nonpartisan office pursuant to section 204B.13, shall not state any political principle or the name of any political party on the petition.

Subd. 2. **Petitions for presidential electors.** This subdivision does not apply to candidates for presidential elector nominated by major political parties. Major party candidates for presidential elector are certified under section 208.03. Other presidential electors are nominated by petition pursuant to this section. On petitions nominating presidential electors, the names of the candidates for president and vice-president shall be added to the political party or political principle stated on the petition. One petition may be filed to nominate a slate of presidential electors equal in number to the number of electors to which the state is entitled.

Subd. 3. **Number of candidates nominated.** No nominating petition shall contain the name of more than one candidate except a petition jointly nominating individuals for governor and lieutenant governor or nominating a slate of presidential electors.

Subd. 4. **Oath and address of signer.** Following the information required by subdivisions 1 and 2 and before the space for signing, each separate page that is part of the petition shall include an oath in the following form:

"I solemnly swear (or affirm) that I know the contents and purpose of this petition, that I do not intend to vote at the primary election for the office for which this nominating petition is made, and that I signed this petition of my own free will."

Notarization or certification of the signatures on a nominating petition is not required. Immediately after the signature, the signer shall write on the petition the signer's residence address including street and number, if any, and mailing address if different from residence address.

Subd. 5. **Sample forms.** An official with whom petitions are filed shall make sample forms for nominating petitions available upon request.

Subd. 6. **Penalty.** An individual who, in signing a nominating petition, makes a false oath

is guilty of perjury.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 7; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 475 s 9,10; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 17; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 15

#### **204B.071 PETITIONS; RULES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.**

The secretary of state shall adopt rules governing the manner in which petitions required for any election in this state are circulated, signed, filed, and inspected. The secretary of state shall provide samples of petition forms for use by election officials.

**History:** 1999 c 132 s 16

#### **204B.08 SIGNING PETITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Time for signing.** Nominating petitions shall be signed during the period when petitions may be filed as provided in section 204B.09.

Subd. 2. **Qualifications of signers.** A nominating petition may be signed only by individuals who are eligible to vote for the candidate who is nominated. No individual may sign more than one nominating petition for candidates for the same office unless more than one candidate is to be elected to that office. If more than one candidate is to be elected to the office, an individual may sign as many petitions as there are candidates to be elected.

Subd. 3. **Number of signatures.** The number of signatures required on a nominating petition shall be as follows:

(a) for a federal or state office voted on statewide, one percent of the total number of individuals voting in the state at the last preceding state general election, or 2,000, whichever is less;

(b) for a congressional office, five percent of the total number of individuals voting in the district at the last preceding state general election, or 1,000, whichever is less;

(c) for a county or legislative office, ten percent of the total number of individuals voting in the county or legislative district at the last preceding state or county general election, or 500, whichever is less;

(d) for a municipal office in a city of the first class, the number specified in section 205.121; and

(e) for any other municipal or school district office, ten percent of the total number of individuals voting in the municipality, ward, school district, or other election district at the last preceding municipal, or school district if applicable, general election, or 500, whichever is less.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 8; 1990 c 453 s 3; 1999 c 132 s 17; 2008 c 244 art 2 s 17

#### **204B.09 TIME AND PLACE OF FILING AFFIDAVITS AND PETITIONS.**

Subdivision 1. **Candidates in state and county general elections.** (a) Except as otherwise provided by this subdivision, affidavits of candidacy and nominating petitions for county, state, and federal offices filled at the state general election shall be filed not more than 84 days nor less than 70 days before the state primary. The affidavit may be prepared and signed at any time between 60 days before the filing period opens and the last day of the filing period.

(b) Notwithstanding other law to the contrary, the affidavit of candidacy must be signed in the presence of a notarial officer or an individual authorized to administer oaths under section 358.10.

(c) This provision does not apply to candidates for presidential elector nominated by major political parties. Major party candidates for presidential elector are certified under section 208.03. Other candidates for presidential electors may file petitions at least 77 days before the general election day pursuant to section 204B.07. Nominating petitions to fill vacancies in nominations shall be filed as provided in section 204B.13. No affidavit or petition shall be accepted later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day for filing.

(d) Affidavits and petitions for county offices must be filed with the county auditor of that county. Affidavits and petitions for federal offices must be filed with the secretary of state. Affidavits and petitions for state offices must be filed with the secretary of state or with the county auditor of the county in which the candidate resides.

(e) Affidavits other than those filed pursuant to subdivision 1a must be submitted by mail or by hand, notwithstanding chapter 325L, or any other law to the contrary and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on the last day for filing.

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 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.

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 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.

Subd. 3. **Write-in candidates.** (a) A candidate for county, state, or federal office who wants write-in votes for the candidate to be counted must file a written request with the filing office for the office sought no later than the seventh day before the general election. The filing officer shall provide copies of the form to make the request.

(b) A candidate for president of the United States who files a request under this subdivision must include the name of a candidate for vice-president of the United States. The request must also include the name of at least one candidate for presidential elector. The total number of names of candidates for presidential elector on the request may not exceed the total number of electoral votes to be cast by Minnesota in the presidential election.

(c) A candidate for governor who files a request under this subdivision must include the name of a candidate for lieutenant governor.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 9; 1986 c 475 s 11; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 24; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 8; 1990 c 585 s 24; 1990 c 608 art 7 s 2; 1991 c 227 s 11; 2000 c 467 s 9-11; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 18,19; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 16,17; 2008 c 244 art 1 s 10; 2010 c 184 s 12

## **204B.10 AFFIDAVITS OF CANDIDACY; NOMINATING PETITIONS; DUTIES.**

Subdivision 1. **Affidavits of candidacy; numbering.** The official with whom affidavits of candidacy are filed shall number them in the order received.

Subd. 2. **Nominating petitions; acknowledgment; numbering.** On the day a nominating petition is filed, the election official shall deliver or mail an acknowledgment of the petition to the individual who files it and to the candidate who is to be nominated. The election official shall also number the petitions in the order received. The petitions shall be retained as provided in section 204B.40, and shall be available for public inspection during that period.

Subd. 3. **Inspection.** The official with whom nominating petitions are filed shall inspect the petitions in the order filed to verify that there are a sufficient number of signatures of individuals whose residence address as shown on the petition is in the district where the candidate is to be nominated.

Subd. 4. **Certification.** The secretary of state shall certify to the county auditor of each county the names of all candidates nominated by petitions filed with the secretary of state. Certification shall be made at the same time as the secretary of state certifies the names of candidates who are nominated at the primary.

Subd. 5. **Improper name.** If the filing officer determines that use on the ballot of the candidate's name as written on the affidavit of candidacy would violate section 204B.35, subdivision 2, the filing officer shall immediately notify the candidate and shall certify for the ballot the candidate's true name instead of the name as written on the affidavit.

Subd. 6. **Ineligible voter.** Upon receipt of a certified copy of a final judgment or order of a court of competent jurisdiction that a person who has filed an affidavit of candidacy or who has been nominated by petition:

(1) has been convicted of treason or a felony and the person's civil rights have not been restored;

(2) is under guardianship in which the court order revokes the ward's right to vote; or

(3) has been found by a court of law to be legally incompetent;

the filing officer shall notify the person by certified mail at the address shown on the affidavit or petition, and, for offices other than President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, United States Senator, and United States Representative in Congress, shall not certify the



person's name to be placed on the ballot. The actions of a filing officer under this subdivision are subject to judicial review under section 204B.44.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 10; 1986 c 475 s 12; 1993 c 364 s 1; 2005 c 10 art 4 s 6; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 33

### **204B.11 CANDIDATES; FILING FEES; PETITION IN PLACE OF FILING FEE.**

Subdivision 1. **Amount; dishonored checks; consequences.** Except as provided by subdivision 2, a filing fee shall be paid by each candidate who files an affidavit of candidacy. The fee shall be paid at the time the affidavit is filed. The amount of the filing fee shall vary with the office sought as follows:

(a) for the office of governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, state auditor, secretary of state, representative in Congress, judge of the Supreme Court, judge of the Court of Appeals, or judge of the district court, \$300;

(b) for the office of senator in Congress, \$400;

(c) for office of senator or representative in the legislature, \$100;

(d) for a county office, \$50; and

(e) for the office of soil and water conservation district supervisor, \$20.

For the office of presidential elector, and for those offices for which no compensation is provided, no filing fee is required.

The filing fees received by the county auditor shall immediately be paid to the county treasurer. The filing fees received by the secretary of state shall immediately be paid to the commissioner of management and budget.

When an affidavit of candidacy has been filed with the appropriate filing officer and the requisite filing fee has been paid, the filing fee shall not be refunded. If a candidate's filing fee is paid with a check, draft, or similar negotiable instrument for which sufficient funds are not available or that is dishonored, notice to the candidate of the worthless instrument must be sent by the filing officer via registered mail no later than immediately upon the closing of the filing deadline with return receipt requested. The candidate will have five days from the time the filing officer receives proof of receipt to issue a check or other instrument for which sufficient funds are available. The candidate issuing the worthless instrument is liable for a service charge pursuant to section 604.113. If adequate payment is not made, the name of the candidate must not appear on any official ballot and the candidate is liable for all costs incurred by election officials in removing the name from the ballot.

Subd. 2. **Petition in place of filing fee.** At the time of filing an affidavit of candidacy, a candidate may present a petition in place of the filing fee. The petition may be signed by any individual eligible to vote for the candidate. A nominating petition filed pursuant to section 204B.07 or 204B.13, subdivision 4, is effective as a petition in place of a filing fee if the nominating petition includes a prominent statement informing the signers of the petition that it will be used for that purpose.

The number of signatures on a petition in place of a filing fee shall be as follows:

(a) for a state office voted on statewide, or for president of the United States, or United States senator, 2,000;

(b) for a congressional office, 1,000;

(c) for a county or legislative office, or for the office of district judge, 500; and

(d) for any other office which requires a filing fee as prescribed by law, municipal charter, or ordinance, the lesser of 500 signatures or five percent of the total number of votes cast in the municipality, ward, or other election district at the preceding general election at which that office was on the ballot.

An official with whom petitions are filed shall make sample forms for petitions in place of filing fees available upon request.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 11; 3Sp1981 c 2 art 1 s 29; 1983 c 112 s 1; 1983 c 247 s 85; 1987 c 175 s 5; 1987 c 404 s 155; 1990 c 603 s 3; 1992 c 513 art 3 s 42; 1998 c 254 art 2 s 21,22; 2003 c 112 art 2 s 50; 2009 c 101 art 2 s 109

### 204B.12 WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATES.

Subdivision 1. **Before primary.** A candidate may withdraw from the primary ballot by filing an affidavit of withdrawal with the same official who received the affidavit of candidacy. The affidavit shall request that official to withdraw the candidate's name from the ballot and shall be filed no later than two days after the last day for filing for the office.

Subd. 2. [Repealed, 1983 c 303 s 24]

Subd. 2a. **After primary; candidates for constitutional office.** (a) A candidate for a constitutional office may withdraw from the general election ballot by filing an affidavit of withdrawal with the same official who received the affidavit of candidacy. The affidavit must request that official to withdraw that candidate's name from the ballot and must be filed no later than 16 days before the general election.

(b) A candidate for a constitutional office may withdraw after the deadline in paragraph (a) if:

(1) the candidate withdraws because of a catastrophic illness that was diagnosed after the deadline for withdrawal;

(2) the candidate's illness will permanently and continuously incapacitate the candidate and prevent the candidate from performing the duties of the office sought; and

(3) the candidate or the candidate's legal guardian files with the affidavit of withdrawal a certificate verifying that the candidate's illness meets the requirements of clauses (1) and (2), signed by at least two licensed physicians.

Subd. 2b. **Governor's race.** If a candidate for governor withdraws, the secretary of state shall remove from the ballot the name of the candidate for governor and the name of that candidate's running mate for lieutenant governor.

Subd. 3. **Time for filing.** An affidavit of withdrawal filed under this section shall not be accepted later than 5:00 p.m. on the last day for withdrawal.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 12; 1983 c 303 s 6; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 475 s 13; 1991 c 320 s 5-7; 2000 c 467 s 12

### 204B.13 VACANCY IN NOMINATION.

Subdivision 1. **Death or withdrawal.** A vacancy in nomination may be filled in the manner provided by this section. A vacancy in nomination exists when:

(a) a major political party candidate or nonpartisan candidate who was nominated at a primary dies or files an affidavit of withdrawal as provided in section 204B.12, subdivision 2a; or

(b) a candidate for a nonpartisan office, for which one or two candidates filed, dies or files an affidavit of withdrawal as provided in section 204B.12, subdivision 1.

**Subd. 2. Partisan office; nomination by party.** (a) A vacancy in nomination for partisan office shall be filled as provided in this subdivision. A major political party has the authority to fill a vacancy in nomination of that party's candidate by filing a nomination certificate with the same official who received the affidavits of candidacy for that office.

(b) A major political party may provide in its governing rules a procedure, including designation of an appropriate committee, to fill vacancies in nomination for all offices elected statewide. The nomination certificate shall be prepared under the direction of and executed by the chair and secretary of the political party and filed within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs or before the 14th day before the general election, whichever is sooner. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the candidate's death or catastrophic illness, the nomination certificate must be filed within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs but no later than four days before the general election. The chair and secretary when filing the certificate shall attach an affidavit stating that the newly nominated candidate has been selected under the rules of the party and that the individuals signing the certificate and making the affidavit are the chair and secretary of the party.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1991 c 320 s 16]

**Subd. 4. Nonpartisan office; filling vacancy by nominating petitions.** A vacancy in nomination in a nonpartisan office may be filled by nominating petition in the manner provided in sections 204B.06 to 204B.09. The petition shall be filed within one week after the vacancy in nomination occurs, but not later than four calendar days before the election.

An eligible voter is eligible to sign a nominating petition to fill a vacancy in nomination without regard to whether that eligible voter intends to vote or did vote for any candidate for that office at the primary or signed other nominating petitions for candidates for that office.

**Subd. 5. Candidates for governor and lieutenant governor.** (a) If a vacancy in nomination occurs in the race for governor, the candidate for governor determined under this section shall select the candidate for lieutenant governor. If a vacancy in nomination occurs in the race for lieutenant governor, due to a vacancy in nomination for governor or due to the withdrawal or death of the candidate for lieutenant governor, the candidate for governor shall select the candidate for lieutenant governor as provided in this subdivision.

(b) For a vacancy in nomination that occurs before the 16th day before the general election, the name of the lieutenant governor candidate must be submitted by the governor candidate to the filing officer within seven days after the vacancy occurs, or before the 14th day before the general election, whichever is sooner. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of the candidate for lieutenant governor, the candidate for governor shall submit the name of the new lieutenant governor candidate to the secretary of state within seven days after the vacancy in nomination occurs but no later than four days before the general election. If the vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of the candidate for governor, the new candidate for governor shall submit the name of the lieutenant governor candidate within seven days after the vacancy in nomination for governor is filled under section 204B.13, subdivision 2, but no later than four days before the general election.

Subd. 6. **Vacancy after deadline.** If a candidate withdraws after the 16th day before the general election but before four days before the general election, the secretary of state shall instruct the election judges to strike the name of the withdrawn candidate from the general election ballot and shall substitute no other candidate's name. Filing officers may not accept a nomination certificate for filing to fill a vacancy in nomination resulting from the filing of an affidavit of withdrawal by a candidate after the 14th day before the general election. Vacancies occurring through death or catastrophic illness after the 16th day before the general election are governed by section 204B.41.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 13; 1986 c 444; 1991 c 320 s 8-12

## **204B.135 REDISTRICTING OF ELECTION DISTRICTS.**

Subdivision 1. **Cities with wards.** Except as provided in this subdivision, a city that elects its council members by wards may not redistrict those wards before the legislature has been redistricted in a year ending in one or two. The wards must be redistricted within 60 days after the legislature has been redistricted or at least 19 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, whichever is first.

In a city electing council members by wards in a year ending in one, the ward boundaries must be reestablished no later than 14 days before the first day to file affidavits of candidacy for city council members. The ward boundaries may be modified after the legislature has been redistricted for the purpose of establishing precinct boundaries as provided in section 204B.14, subdivision 3, but no modification in ward boundaries may result in a change of the population of any ward of more than five percent, plus or minus.

Subd. 2. **Other election districts.** For purposes of this subdivision, "local government election district" means a county district, park and recreation district, school district, or soil and water conservation district. Local government election districts, other than city wards covered by subdivision 1, may not be redistricted until precinct boundaries are reestablished under section 204B.14, subdivision 3, paragraph (c). Election districts covered by this subdivision must be redistricted within 80 days of the time when the legislature has been redistricted or at least 15 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, whichever comes first.

Subd. 3. **Voters rights.** (a) An eligible voter may apply to the district court for either a writ of mandamus requiring the redistricting of wards or local government election districts or to revise any plan adopted by the governing body responsible for redistricting of wards or local government election districts.

(b) If a city adopts a ward redistricting plan at least 19 weeks before the primary in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court within three weeks but no later than 18 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two, notwithstanding any charter provision. If a city adopts a ward redistricting plan less than 19 weeks before either the municipal primary in a year ending in one or before the state primary in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in that year must be filed with the district court no later than one week after the plan has been adopted, notwithstanding any charter provision.

(c) If a plan for redistricting of a local government election district is adopted at least 15 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court within three weeks but no later than 14 weeks before the state primary election in the year

ending in two. If a plan for redistricting of a local government election district is adopted less than 15 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, an application for revision of the plan that seeks to affect elections held in the year ending in two must be filed with the district court no later than one week after the plan has been adopted.

Subd. 4. **Special elections; limitations.** No municipality or school district may conduct a special election during the 19 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two. A school district special election required by any other law may be deferred until the date of the next school district general election, the state primary election, or the state general election.

Subd. 5. **Redistricting expenses.** The county board may levy a tax not to exceed \$1 per capita in the year ending in "0" to pay costs incurred in the year ending in "1" or "2" that are reasonably related to the redistricting of election districts, establishment of precinct boundaries, designation of polling places, and the updating of voter records in the statewide registration system. The county auditor shall distribute to each municipality in the county on a per capita basis 25 percent of the amount levied as provided in this subdivision, based on the population of the municipality in the most recent census. This levy is not subject to statutory levy limits.

**History:** 1987 c 297 s 1; 1991 c 349 s 30; 1999 c 243 art 6 s 1; 2010 c 201 s 23; 2010 c 313 s 1,2

#### **204B.14 ELECTION PRECINCTS.**

Subdivision 1. **Boundaries.** The governing body of each municipality shall establish the boundaries of the election precincts in the municipality. The governing body of a county shall establish the boundaries of precincts in unorganized territory in the county. Except as provided in subdivision 3, a governing body may change the boundaries of any election precinct which it has established.

Subd. 1a. **Legislative policy.** It is the intention of the legislature to complete congressional and legislative redistricting activities in time to permit counties and municipalities to begin the process of reestablishing precinct boundaries as soon as possible after the adoption of the congressional and legislative redistricting plans but in no case later than 25 weeks before the state primary election in the year ending in two.

Subd. 2. **Separate precincts; combined polling place.** (a) The following shall constitute at least one election precinct:

- (1) each city ward; and
- (2) each town and each statutory city.

(b) A single, accessible, combined polling place may be established no later than May 1 of any year:

(1) for any city of the third or fourth class, any town, or any city having territory in more than one county, in which all the voters of the city or town shall cast their ballots;

(2) for two contiguous precincts in the same municipality that have a combined total of fewer than 500 registered voters;

(3) for up to four contiguous municipalities located entirely outside the metropolitan area, as defined by section 200.02, subdivision 24, that are contained in the same county; or

- (4) for noncontiguous precincts located in one or more counties.

A copy of the ordinance or resolution establishing a combined polling place must be filed with the county auditor within 30 days after approval by the governing body. A polling place combined under clause (3) must be approved by the governing body of each participating municipality. A polling place combined under clause (4) must be approved by the governing body of each participating municipality and the secretary of state and may be located outside any of the noncontiguous precincts. A municipality withdrawing from participation in a combined polling place must do so by filing a resolution of withdrawal with the county auditor no later than April 1 of any year.

The secretary of state shall provide a separate polling place roster for each precinct served by the combined polling place. A single set of election judges may be appointed to serve at a combined polling place. The number of election judges required must be based on the total number of persons voting at the last similar election in all precincts to be voting at the combined polling place. Separate ballot boxes must be provided for the ballots from each precinct. The results of the election must be reported separately for each precinct served by the combined polling place, except in a polling place established under clause (2) where one of the precincts has fewer than ten registered voters, in which case the results of that precinct must be reported in the manner specified by the secretary of state.

Subd. 3. **Boundary changes; prohibitions; exception.** Notwithstanding other law or charter provisions to the contrary, during the period from January 1 in any year ending in zero to the time when the legislature has been redistricted in a year ending in one or two, no changes may be made in the boundaries of any election precinct except as provided in this subdivision.

(a) If a city annexes an unincorporated area located in the same county as the city and adjacent to the corporate boundary, the annexed area may be included in an election precinct immediately adjacent to it.

(b) A municipality or county may establish new election precincts lying entirely within the boundaries of any existing precinct and shall assign names to the new precincts which include the name of the former precinct.

(c) Precinct boundaries in a city electing council members by wards may be reestablished within four weeks of the adoption of ward boundaries in a year ending in one, as provided in section 204B.135, subdivision 1.

(d) Precinct boundaries must be reestablished within 60 days of the time when the legislature has been redistricted, or at least 19 weeks before the state primary election in a year ending in two, whichever comes first. The adoption of reestablished precinct boundaries becomes effective on the date of the state primary election in the year ending in two.

Precincts must be arranged so that no precinct lies in more than one legislative or congressional district.

Subd. 4. **Boundary change procedure.** Any change in the boundary of an election precinct must be adopted at least ten weeks before the date of the next election and, for the state primary and general election, no later than June 1 in the year of the state general election. The precinct boundary change shall not take effect until notice of the change has been posted in the office of the municipal clerk or county auditor for at least 56 days.

The county auditor must publish a notice illustrating or describing the congressional, legislative, and county commissioner district boundaries in the county in one or more qualified

newspapers in the county at least 14 days before the first day to file affidavits of candidacy for the state general election in the year ending in two.

Alternate dates for adopting changes in precinct boundaries, posting notices of boundary changes, and notifying voters affected by boundary changes pursuant to this subdivision, and procedures for coordinating precinct boundary changes with reestablishing local government election district boundaries may be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state.

**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 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 days before a regularly scheduled election takes effect the day after the scheduled election.

**Subd. 5. Precinct boundaries; description; maps.** If a precinct boundary has been changed or an annexation has occurred affecting a precinct boundary, the municipal clerk shall immediately notify the county auditor and secretary of state. The municipal clerk shall file a corrected base map with the secretary of state and county auditor within 30 days after the boundary change was made or, in the case of an annexation, the later of: (1) 30 days after the approval of the annexation order; or (2) the effective date of the annexation order. Upon request, the county auditor shall provide a base map and precinct finder to the municipal clerk. The municipal clerk shall prepare a corrected precinct map and provide the corrected map to the county auditor, who shall correct the precinct finder in the statewide voter registration system and make the corrected map and precinct finder available for public inspection, and to the secretary of state, who shall update the precinct boundary database. The county auditor shall prepare and file precinct boundary maps for precincts in unorganized territories in the same manner as provided for precincts in municipalities. For every election held in the municipality the election judges shall be furnished precinct maps as provided in section 201.061, subdivision 6. If a municipality changes the boundary of an election precinct, or if an annexation affecting a precinct boundary occurs, the county auditor shall notify each school district with territory affected by the boundary change at least 30 days before the effective date of the change.

**Subd. 6. Precinct boundaries to follow physical features.** (a) Unless a precinct consists entirely of unorganized territory or more than one precinct is entirely included within one census block, for the first two years following a decennial census an election precinct boundary must follow a census block line.

(b) The boundaries of election precincts must follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features. If it is not possible to establish the boundary between any two adjacent precincts along such features, the boundary around the two precincts combined shall be established in the manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state to comply with the provisions of this subdivision. The maps required by subdivision 5 shall clearly indicate which boundaries do not follow visible, clearly recognizable physical features.

(c) For the purposes of this subdivision, "visible, clearly recognizable physical feature" means a street, road, boulevard, parkway, river, stream, shoreline, drainage ditch, railway right-of-way, or any other line which is clearly visible from the ground. A street or other roadway

which has been platted but not graded is not a visible, clearly recognizable physical feature for the purposes of this subdivision.

(d) If the secretary of state determines that a precinct boundary does not comply with this subdivision, the secretary of state shall send a notice to the county auditor or municipal clerk specifying the action needed to correct the precinct boundary. If, after 60 days, the county or municipal governing body has not taken action to correct the precinct boundary, the secretary of state shall correct the precinct boundary and notify the county auditor or municipal clerk of the action taken.

(e) If a visible, clearly recognizable physical feature is not available for use as a precinct boundary, an alternate boundary used by the United States Bureau of the Census may be authorized by the secretary of state.

Subd. 7. **Application to municipalities.** Notwithstanding the provisions of section 410.21, or any other law, ordinance or charter to the contrary, the provisions of subdivisions 1, 3 and 6 apply to all municipalities.

Subd. 8. [Repealed, 1994 c 607 s 7]

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 14; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 4 s 43; 2Sp1981 c 2 s 2; 1983 c 289 s 115 subd 1; 1985 c 248 s 36; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 186 s 15; 1987 c 212 s 1-4; 1987 c 297 s 2; 1990 c 453 s 4; 1991 c 349 s 31-34; 1993 c 208 s 1,2; 1993 c 223 s 9; 1994 c 607 s 1-4; 1999 c 237 s 1; 2000 c 467 s 13-15; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 34; 2005 c 162 s 2; 2006 c 270 art 1 s 1; 2010 c 184 s 13,14; 2010 c 201 s 24; 2010 c 313 s 3,4

#### **204B.145 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE; REDISTRICTING.**

Following the completion of legislative redistricting, the secretary of state may coordinate and facilitate the exchange of information between the legislative redistricting computer system, the statewide voter registration system, and a computer system developed to assist the counties, municipalities, and school districts in redrawing election districts and establishing election precincts.

**History:** 1991 c 345 art 1 s 80

#### **204B.146 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.**

Subdivision 1. **Redistricting.** The secretary of state shall conduct conferences with the county auditors, municipal clerks, and school district clerks to instruct them on the procedures for redistricting of election districts and establishment of election precincts in the year ending in one.

Subd. 2. **Precinct and election district boundaries.** The secretary of state shall maintain a computer database of precinct and election district boundaries. The secretary of state shall revise the information in the database whenever a precinct or election district boundary is changed. The secretary of state shall prepare maps illustrating precinct and election district boundaries in either paper or electronic formats and make them available to the public at the cost of production.

The secretary of state may authorize municipalities and counties to provide updated precinct and election district boundary information in electronic formats.

The secretary of state shall provide periodic updates of precinct and election district boundaries to the Legislative Coordinating Commission, the state demographer, and the Minnesota Geospatial Information Office.



At the request of the county auditor, the secretary of state shall provide the county auditor with precinct maps. The county auditor shall forward the maps to the appropriate municipal clerks, who shall post the map in the polling place on the day of the state primary and the state general election.

**Subd. 3. Correction to election district boundaries.** When a municipal boundary that is coterminous with a congressional, legislative, or county commissioner district boundary has changed and the affected territory contains 50 or fewer registered voters, the secretary of state may order corrections to move the affected election district boundaries so they again will be coterminous with the municipal boundary. The election district boundary change is effective 28 days after the date that the order is issued. The secretary of state shall immediately notify the municipal clerk and county auditor affected by the boundary change and the Legislative Coordinating Commission. The municipal clerk shall send a nonforwardable notice stating the location of the polling place to every household containing a registered voter affected by the boundary change at least 25 days before the next election.

**History:** 1991 c 349 s 35; 1993 c 208 s 3; 1997 c 147 s 27; 1999 c 132 s 18; 1999 c 237 s 2; 2009c 101 art 2 s 107

#### **204B.15 UNORGANIZED TERRITORY; ELECTION PRECINCTS.**

A county board may establish new election precincts to serve the residents of unorganized territories. The board shall designate a polling place for the new precinct that is convenient for the individuals residing in it.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 15; 1997 c 147 s 28

#### **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. Polling places must be designated and ballots must be distributed so that no one is required to go to more than one polling place to vote in a school district and municipal election held on the same day. The polling place for a precinct in a city or in a school district located in whole or in part in the metropolitan area defined by section 200.02, subdivision 24, shall be located within the boundaries of the precinct or within one mile of one of those boundaries unless a single polling place is designated for a city pursuant to section 204B.14, subdivision 2, or a school district pursuant to section 205A.11. 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. If no suitable place is available within a town or within a school district located outside the metropolitan area defined by section 200.02, subdivision 24, then the polling place for a town or school district may be located outside the town or school district within five miles of one of the boundaries of the town or school district.

**Subd. 1a. Notice to voters.** If the location of a polling place has been changed, the governing body establishing the polling place shall send to every affected household with at least one registered voter in the precinct a nonforwardable mailed notice stating the location of the new polling place at least 25 days before the next election. The secretary of state shall prepare a sample of this notice. A notice that is returned as undeliverable must be forwarded immediately to the county auditor. This subdivision does not apply to a polling place location that is changed on election day under section 204B.17.

Subd. 2. [Repealed, 1994 c 607 s 7]

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 90 days prior to an election, including school district elections or referenda, and no polling place changes may occur during the period between the state primary and the state general election, except that a new polling place may be designated to replace a polling place that has become unavailable for use.

Subd. 4. **Prohibited locations.** No polling place shall be designated in any place where intoxicating liquors or nonintoxicating 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 persons with disabilities.** Each polling place shall be accessible to and usable by elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. A polling place is deemed to be accessible and usable if it complies with the standards in paragraphs (a) to (f).

(a) At least one set of doors must have a minimum width of 32 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 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.

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

(e) No barrier in the polling place may impede the path of persons with disabilities to the voting booth.

(f) At least one parking space for persons with disabilities, 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 disabled parking provided pursuant to this subdivision must conform to the standards specified in the State Building Code for accessibility by persons with disabilities.

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, school district, state, and federal elections, subject to the approval of the local election official. 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.

Subd. 7. **Appropriate facilities.** The facilities provided in accordance with subdivision 6 shall be sufficient in size to accommodate all election activities and the requirements of

subdivision 5. The space must be separated from other activities within the building. The local election official may approve space in two connecting rooms for registration and balloting activities. Except in the event of an emergency making the approved space unusable, the public facility may not move the election from the space approved by the local election official without prior approval. In addition to the requirements of subdivision 5, the public facility must make remaining parking spaces not in use for regularly scheduled activities available for voters.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 16; 1983 c 124 s 4; 1984 c 471 s 5; 1985 c 307 s 1; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 25; 1991 c 227 s 12,13; 1991 c 349 s 36,37; 1992 c 474 s 1; 1993 c 223 s 10; 1997 c 147 s 29,30; 2000 c 467 s 16; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 18; 2005 c 56 s 1; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 35,36; 2008 c 244 art 1 s 11

#### **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 school districts 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.

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 section 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.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 17; 1984 c 471 s 6; 1990 c 453 s 5

#### **204B.18 POLLING PLACES; EQUIPMENT.**

Subdivision 1. **Booths; voting stations.** (a) Each polling place must contain a number of voting booths or voting stations in proportion to the number of individuals eligible to vote in the precinct. Each booth or station 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 or station shall permit the voter to vote privately and independently.

(b) Each polling place must have at least one accessible voting booth or other accessible voting station and beginning with federal and state elections held after December 31, 2005, and county, municipal, and school district elections held after December 31, 2007, one voting system that conforms to section 301(a)(3)(B) of the Help America Vote Act, Public Law 107-252.

(c) Local jurisdictions must make accessible voting stations purchased with funds provided from the Help America Vote Act account available to other local jurisdictions holding stand-alone elections. The jurisdiction providing the equipment may require the jurisdiction using the equipment to reimburse any direct actual costs incurred as a result of the equipment's use and any prorated indirect costs of maintaining and storing the equipment. A rental or other similar use fee may not be charged.

Any funds received under this paragraph for expenses incurred by that local jurisdiction as a direct result of making the equipment available that were not paid for in whole or in part with funds from the Help America Vote Act account are not program income under the Help America Vote Act, Public Law 107-252.

Any funds received by a local jurisdiction making the equipment available as reimbursement for expenses as defined as "operating costs" under Laws 2005, chapter 162, section 34, subdivision 1, paragraph (b), and paid for in whole or in part with funds from the Help America Vote Act account must be treated as program income and deposited into the jurisdiction's Help America Vote Act account in the direct proportion that funds from the Help America Vote Act account were used to pay for those "operating costs."

(d) All booths or stations must be constructed so that a voter is free from observation while marking ballots. During the hours of voting, the booths or stations must have instructions, a pencil, and other supplies needed to mark the ballots. A chair must be provided for elderly voters and voters with disabilities to use while voting or waiting to vote. Stable flat writing surfaces must also be made available to voters who are completing election-related forms.

(e) All ballot boxes, voting booths, voting stations, and election judges must be in open public view in the polling place.

Subd. 2. **Ballot boxes.** Each polling place shall be provided with one ballot box for each kind of ballot to be cast at the election. The boxes shall be substantially the same color as the ballots to be deposited in them. Each box shall be of sufficient size and shall have a sufficient opening to receive and contain all the ballots likely to be deposited in it. When buff or goldenrod ballot boxes are required, a separate box must be provided for each school district for which ballots are to be cast at that polling place. The number and name of the school district must appear conspicuously on the top of each buff or goldenrod ballot box.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 18; 1984 c 471 s 7; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 26; 2000 c 467 s 17; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 37; 2010 c 201 s 25

## 204B.19 ELECTION JUDGES; QUALIFICATIONS.

Subdivision 1. **Individuals qualified to be election judges.** Except as provided in subdivision 6, any individual who is eligible to vote in this state is qualified to be appointed as an election judge.

Subd. 2. **Individuals not qualified to be election judges.** (a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), no individual shall be appointed as an election judge for any precinct if that individual:

- (1) is unable to read, write, or speak the English language;
- (2) is the spouse, parent, child, including a stepchild, or sibling, including a stepsibling, of any election judge serving in the same precinct or of any candidate at that election; or
- (3) is a candidate at that election.

(b) Individuals who are related to each other as provided in paragraph (a), clause (2), may serve as election judges in the same precinct, provided that they serve on separate shifts that do not run concurrently.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 1985 c 248 s 37]

Subd. 4. **Additional qualifications permitted; examination.** The appointing authority

may establish additional qualifications which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this section and which relate to the ability of an individual to perform the duties of an election judge. The appointing authority may examine any individual who seeks appointment as an election judge to determine whether the individual meets any qualification established under this section.

**Subd. 5. Party balance requirement.** No more than half of the election judges in a precinct may be members of the same major political party unless the election board consists of an odd number of election judges, in which case the number of election judges who are members of the same major political party may be one more than half the number of election judges in that precinct.

**Subd. 6. High school students.** Notwithstanding any other requirements of this section, a student enrolled in a high school in Minnesota or who is in a home-school in compliance with sections 120A.22 and 120A.24, who has attained the age of 16 is eligible to be appointed as a without party affiliation trainee election judge in the county in which the student resides. The student must meet qualifications for trainee election judges specified in rules of the secretary of state. A student appointed as a trainee election judge may be excused from school attendance during the hours that the student is serving as a trainee election judge if the student submits a written request signed and approved by the student's parent or guardian to be absent from school and a certificate from the appointing authority stating the hours during which the student will serve as a trainee election judge to the principal of the school at least ten days prior to the election. Students shall not serve as trainee election judges after 10:00 p.m. Notwithstanding section 177.24 to the contrary, trainee election judges may be paid not less than two-thirds of the minimum wage for a large employer. The principal of the school may approve a request to be absent from school conditioned on acceptable academic performance at the time of service as a trainee election judge.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 19; 1983 c 126 s 1; 1983 c 303 s 7; 1985 c 39 s 1; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 27; 1991 c 237 s 1,2; 1995 c 34 s 1; 2000 c 467 s 18; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 19,20; 2010 c 180 s 1

#### **204B.195 TIME OFF FROM WORK TO SERVE AS ELECTION JUDGE.**

An individual who is selected to serve as an election judge pursuant to section 204B.21, subdivision 2 may, after giving an employer at least 20 days' written notice, be absent from a place of work for the purpose of serving as an election judge without penalty. An employer may reduce the salary or wages of an employee serving as an election judge by the amount paid to the election judge by the appointing authority during the time the employee was absent from the place of employment.

The written request to be absent from work must be accompanied by a certification from the appointing authority stating the hourly compensation to be paid the employee for service as an election judge and the hours during which the employee will serve. An employer may restrict the number of persons to be absent from work for the purpose of serving as an election judge to no more than 20 percent of the total work force at any single worksite.

**History:** 1983 c 126 s 2; 1986 c 444; 1991 c 237 s 3

#### **204B.20 ELECTION BOARD; HEAD ELECTION JUDGE; DUTIES.**

The election judges appointed to serve in an election precinct shall constitute the election board for that precinct. The appointing authority shall designate one of the election judges in each precinct to serve as the head election judge. The head election judge shall assign specific duties

to the election judges of that precinct as necessary or convenient to complete forms, obtain signatures, and perform all the other duties required of election judges.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 20; 1986 c 444; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 20

#### **204B.21 APPOINTMENT OF ELECTION JUDGES.**

Subdivision 1. **Appointment lists; duties of political parties and secretary of state.** On May 1 in a year in which there is an election for a partisan political office, each major political party shall prepare a list of eligible voters to act as election judges in each election precinct. The political parties shall 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, the associated name must not appear in any list forwarded to an appointing authority under this subdivision. The secretary of state shall notify political parties of any proposed election judges with addresses that could not be located in a precinct.

By May 15, the secretary of state shall furnish electronically to the county auditor a list of the appropriate names for each election precinct in the jurisdiction of the appointing authority, 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.

Subd. 2. **Appointing authority; powers and duties.** Election judges for precincts in a municipality shall 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 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 lists 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 who are not affiliated with a major political party. The appointments shall 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.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 21; 1983 c 303 s 8; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 212 s 5; 1999 c 132 s 19; 2008 c 295 s 11,12; 2010 c 180 s 2,3; 2010 c 184 s 15

#### **204B.22 ELECTION JUDGES; NUMBER REQUIRED.**

Subdivision 1. **Minimum number required.** (a) A minimum of four election judges shall be appointed for each precinct, except as provided by subdivision 2. In a combined polling place under section 204B.14, subdivision 2, at least one judge must be appointed from each municipality in the combined polling place, provided that not less than three judges shall be appointed for each combined polling place. The appointing authorities may appoint election

judges for any precinct in addition to the number required by this subdivision including additional election judges to count ballots after voting has ended.

(b) An election judge may serve for all or part of election day, at the discretion of the appointing authority, as long as the minimum number of judges required is always present. The head election judge designated under section 204B.20 must serve for all of election day and be present in the polling place unless another election judge has been designated by the head election judge to perform the functions of the head election judge during any absence.

Subd. 2. **Exception.** A minimum of three election judges shall be appointed in precincts not using electronic voting equipment. One additional election judge shall be appointed for each 150 votes cast in that precinct at the last similar election.

Subd. 3. [Repealed, 2010 c 201 s 82]

Subd. 4. **Election judge trainees not counted toward minimum number of election judges.** The presence or participation of election judge trainees must not be counted toward satisfying any of the required numbers of election judges in this chapter.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 22; 1986 c 362 s 3; 1987 c 212 s 6; 1994 c 607 s 5; 1997 c 147 s 31; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 21,22; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 21; 2010 c 201 s 26,27

#### **204B.23 VACANCIES AMONG ELECTION JUDGES.**

A vacancy on an election board occurs when any election judge who is a member of that board:

- (a) fails to arrive at the polling place within 30 minutes after the time when the polling place is scheduled to open;
- (b) becomes unable to perform the duties of the office after assuming those duties; or
- (c) for any reason fails or refuses to perform the duties of the office as assigned by the head election judge.

When a vacancy occurs, the remaining election judges of the precinct shall elect an individual to fill the vacancy subject to the provisions of section 204B.19. When possible the election judges shall elect individuals who have been trained as election judges pursuant to section 204B.25. The oath signed by the new election judge shall indicate that the new election judge was elected to fill a vacancy. The municipal clerk may assign election judges to fill vacancies as they occur.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 23; 1986 c 444; 1997 c 147 s 32; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 23

#### **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 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. 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."

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.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 24; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 38; 2010 c 201 s 28

**204B.25 TRAINING FOR ELECTION JUDGES.**

Subdivision 1. **Duties of county auditor.** Each county auditor shall provide training for all election judges who are appointed to serve at any election to be held in the county. The county auditor shall also provide a procedure for emergency training of election judges elected to fill vacancies. The county auditor may delegate to a municipal election official the duty to provide training of election judges in that municipality or school district.

Subd. 2. **Rules of secretary of state.** The secretary of state shall adopt rules establishing programs for the training of county auditors, local election officials, and election judges by county auditors as required by this section.

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.

Subd. 4. **Training for local election officials.** At least once every two years, the county auditor shall conduct training sessions for the municipal and school district clerks in the county. The training sessions must be conducted in the manner provided by the secretary of state. No local election official may administer an election without receiving training from the county auditor.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 25; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 28; 1999 c 250 art 1 s 86,87

**204B.26 ELECTION JUDGES; VIOLATIONS; PENALTIES.**

Any individual who serves as an election judge in violation of any of the provisions of sections 204B.19 to 204B.25, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 26

**204B.27 DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.**

Subdivision 1. **Blank forms.** At least 14 days before every state election the secretary of state shall transmit to each county auditor examples of any blank forms to be used as the secretary of state deems necessary for the conduct of the election. County abstract forms may be provided to auditors electronically via the Minnesota State Election Reporting System maintained by the secretary of state, and must be available at least one week prior to the election.

Subd. 2. **Election law and instructions.** The secretary of state shall prepare and publish a volume containing all state general laws relating to elections. The attorney general shall provide annotations to the secretary of state for this volume. On or before August 1 of every odd-numbered year the secretary of state shall furnish to the county auditors and municipal clerks enough copies of this volume so that each county auditor and municipal clerk will have at least one copy. On or before July 1 of every even-numbered year, the secretary of state shall prepare and make an electronic copy available on the office's Web site. The secretary of state may prepare and transmit to the county auditors and municipal clerks detailed written instructions for complying with election laws relating to the conduct of elections, conduct of voter registration and voting procedures.

Subd. 3. **Instruction posters.** At least 25 days before every state primary election, the secretary of state shall prepare and furnish to the county auditor of each county voter instruction posters printed in large type upon cards or heavy paper. The instruction posters 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 disabled voters. Two instruction posters shall be furnished for each precinct. Upon mutual agreement, the secretary of state may provide the posters in an electronic format.

Subd. 4. **Pamphlets.** The secretary of state 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 disabled individuals and residents of health care facilities and hospitals.

Subd. 5. **Conferences for county auditors.** Before each state primary the secretary of state shall conduct conferences with county auditors to instruct them on the administration of election laws and the training of local election officials and election judges.

Subd. 6. **Voter participation.** The secretary of state may sponsor or participate in nonpartisan activities to promote voter participation in Minnesota elections and in efforts to increase voter registration and voter turnout.

Subd. 7. **Educational activities.** The secretary of state may authorize educational activities related to voting and elections for elementary or secondary school students in the polling place on the day of a state, county, municipal, or school district election. Ballots used for educational activities must be a different color than any ballot used at the election. Activities authorized under this subdivision must be administered in a manner that does not interfere with the conduct of the election.

Subd. 8. **Voter information telephone line.** The secretary of state shall provide a voter information telephone line. A toll-free number must be provided for use by persons residing outside the metropolitan calling area. The secretary of state shall make available information concerning voter registration, absentee voting, election results, and other election-related information considered by the secretary of state to be useful to the public.

Subd. 9. **Election supply contract.** The secretary of state may enter into a statewide contract from which any county auditor may purchase ballots, forms, or other election supplies.

Subd. 10. **Training for county auditors; training materials.** The secretary of state shall develop a training program in election administration for county auditors and shall certify each county auditor who successfully completes the training program. The secretary of state shall provide each county auditor with materials for use in training local election officials and election judges.

Subd. 11. **Translation of voting instructions.** The secretary of state may develop voting instructions in languages other than English, to be posted and made available in polling places during elections. The state demographer shall determine and report to the secretary of state the languages that are so common in this state that there is a need for translated voting instructions.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 27; 1983 c 303 s 9; 1984 c 471 s 8,9; 1984 c 560 s 10,11; 1987 c 175 s 6; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 9; 1991 c 237 s 4; 1992 c 513 art 3 s 43; 1994 c 632 art 3 s 54; 1997 c 147 s 33; 1999 c 132 s 20; 1999 c 250 art 1 s 88; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 24; 2005 c 56 s 1; 2005 c 156 art 6 s 39; 2010 c 201 s 29,30

## **204B.28 CLERKS; ELECTION SUPPLIES; DUTIES.**

Subdivision 1. **Meeting with election officials.** At least 12 weeks before each regularly

scheduled general election, each county auditor shall conduct a meeting with local election officials to review the procedures for the election. The county auditor may require the head election judges in the county to attend this meeting.

**Subd. 2. Election supplies; duties of county auditors and clerks.** Except as otherwise provided for absentee ballots in section 204B.35, subdivision 4, the county auditor shall complete the preparation of the election materials for which the auditor is responsible at least four days before every state primary and state general election. At any time after all election materials are available from the county auditor but not later than four days before the election each municipal clerk shall secure from the county auditor:

- (a) the forms that are required for the conduct of the election;
- (b) any printed voter instruction materials furnished by the secretary of state;
- (c) any other instructions for election officers; and

(d) a sufficient quantity of the official ballots, registration files, envelopes for ballot returns, and other supplies and materials required for each precinct in order to comply with the provisions of the Minnesota Election Law. The county auditor may furnish the election supplies to the municipal clerks in the same manner as the supplies are furnished to precincts in unorganized territory pursuant to section 204B.29, subdivision 1.

**Subd. 3. Certification of number.** The county auditor or municipal clerk must certify the number of ballots being provided to each precinct and provide this number to the election judges for inclusion on the summary statement. The auditor or clerk must not open prepackaged ballots, but must count the ballots, presuming that the total count for each package is correct.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 28; 1981 c 217 s 5; 1984 c 560 s 12; 1986 c 444; 1990 c 585 s 25; 1999 c 250 art 1 s 89; 1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 25; 2010 c 201 s 31

## **204B.29 ELECTION JUDGES; ELECTION SUPPLIES; DUTIES.**

**Subdivision 1. Securing election materials.** Before 9:00 p.m. on the day preceding an election, at least one election judge from each precinct in each municipality, or school district if applicable, shall secure voter registration files, ballots, forms, envelopes and other required supplies from the municipal clerk, school district clerk, or other legal custodian. The election judge shall deliver the materials to the polling place before the time when voting is scheduled to begin on election day. The county auditor shall send or deliver the election supplies enumerated in this section to the election judges in the precincts in unorganized territory. The election supplies may be sent by certified mail, parcel post, express mail or any other postal service providing assured delivery by no later than the day before the election. If the election supplies are delivered by any other means, they shall be delivered by no later than the day before the election.

Each precinct shall be furnished with 100 ballots of each kind for every 85 individuals who voted in that precinct at the last election for the same office or on similar questions, or with ballots of each kind in an amount at least ten percent greater than the number of votes which are reasonably expected to be cast in that precinct in that election, whichever supply of ballots is greater. No precinct shall be furnished with any ballots containing the name of any candidate who cannot properly be voted for in that precinct.

The election judges shall be responsible for the preservation of all election materials received by them until returned to the appropriate election officials after the voting has ended.

**Subd. 2. Failure of election judges to secure materials.** If no election judge secures the

election materials for a precinct in any municipality, or school district if applicable, as provided in subdivision 1, the municipal or school district clerk shall deliver them to an election judge for that precinct not later than the time when voting is scheduled to begin. The municipal or school district clerk shall require the election judge accepting delivery of the election supplies to sign a receipt for them. The election judges of that precinct shall pay the expenses of delivery of the materials and shall be liable for the penalty provided by law for neglect of duty.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 29; 1984 c 560 s 13; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 29

### **204B.30 UNOFFICIAL BALLOTS.**

When no official or substitute ballots are ready at the time when voting is scheduled to begin or if the supply is exhausted before the voting ends, the election judges shall contact the municipal clerk and, at the clerk's direction, shall prepare unofficial ballots, printed or written as nearly as practicable in the form of the official ballots, which ballots may be used until official or substitute ballots are available. When unofficial ballots are prepared and used in any precinct, the election judges shall note that fact on the summary statement of the returns for that precinct and specify the number of unofficial ballots that were cast.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 30; 1986 c 444

### **204B.31 COMPENSATION FOR ELECTION SERVICES.**

Subdivision 1. **Compensation.** The compensation for services performed under the Minnesota Election Law shall be as follows:

(a) to presidential electors from funds appropriated to the secretary of state for this purpose, \$35 for each day of attendance at the Capitol and mileage for travel to and from the Capitol in the amount allowed for state employees in accordance with section 43A.18, subdivision 2;

(b) to individuals, other than county, city, school district, or town employees during their normal workday, who are appointed by the county auditor to carry ballots to or from the county auditor's office, a sum not less than the prevailing Minnesota minimum wage for each hour spent in carrying ballots and mileage in the amount allowed pursuant to section 471.665, subdivision 1;

(c) to members of county canvassing boards, a sum not less than the prevailing Minnesota minimum wage for each hour necessarily spent and an amount for each mile of necessary travel equal to the amount allowed pursuant to section 471.665, subdivision 1;

(d) to election judges serving in any city, an amount fixed by the governing body of the city; to election judges serving in any school district election which is not held in conjunction with a state election, an amount fixed by the school board of the school district; to election judges serving in unorganized territory, an amount fixed by the county board; and to election judges serving in towns, an amount fixed by the town board. Election judges shall receive at least the prevailing Minnesota minimum wage for each hour spent carrying out their duties at the polling places and in attending training sessions required by section 204B.25, except as provided in subdivision 2. An election judge who travels to pick up election supplies or to deliver election returns to the county auditor shall receive, in addition to other compensation authorized by this section, a sum not less than the prevailing Minnesota minimum wage for each hour spent performing these duties, plus mileage in the same amount as allowed pursuant to section 471.665, subdivision 1; and

(e) to sergeants at arms, an amount for each hour of service performed at the direction of the election judges, fixed in the same manner as compensation for election judges.

Subd. 2. **Volunteer service.** Any person appointed to serve as an election judge may elect

to serve without payment by submitting a written statement to the appropriate governing body no later than ten days before the election.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 31; 1982 c 424 s 58; 1983 c 126 s 3; 1983 c 253 s 8; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 30; 1997 c 147 s 34

### **204B.32 ELECTION EXPENSES; PAYMENT.**

Subdivision 1. **Payment.** (a) The secretary of state shall pay the compensation for presidential electors, the cost of printing the pink paper ballots, and all necessary expenses incurred by the secretary of state in connection with elections.

(b) The counties shall pay the compensation prescribed in section 204B.31, clauses (b) and (c), the cost of printing the canary ballots, the white ballots, the pink ballots when machines are used, the state partisan primary ballots, and the state and county nonpartisan primary ballots, all necessary expenses incurred by county auditors in connection with elections, and the expenses of special county elections.

(c) Subject to subdivision 2, the municipalities shall pay the compensation prescribed for election judges and sergeants at arms, the cost of printing the municipal ballots, providing ballot boxes, providing and equipping polling places and all necessary expenses of the municipal clerks in connection with elections, except special county elections.

(d) The school districts shall pay the compensation prescribed for election judges and sergeants-at-arms, the cost of printing the school district ballots, providing ballot boxes, providing and equipping polling places and all necessary expenses of the school district clerks in connection with school district elections not held in conjunction with state elections. When school district elections are held in conjunction with state elections, the school district shall pay the costs of printing the school district ballots, providing ballot boxes and all necessary expenses of the school district clerk.

All disbursements under this section shall be presented, audited, and paid as in the case of other public expenses.

Subd. 2. **Allocation of election expenses.** The secretary of state shall develop procedures for the allocation of election expenses among counties, municipalities, and school districts for elections that are held concurrently. The following expenses must be included in the procedures: salaries of election judges; postage for absentee ballots and applications; preparation of polling places; preparation and testing of electronic voting systems; ballot preparation; publication of election notices and sample ballots; transportation of ballots and election supplies; and compensation for administrative expenses of the county auditor, municipal clerk, or school district clerk.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 32; 1983 c 301 s 162; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 31; 1991 c 227 s 14; 1995 c 8 s 3

### **204B.33 NOTICE OF FILING.**

(a) At least 15 weeks before the state primary, the secretary of state shall notify each county auditor of the offices to be voted for in that county at the next state general election for which candidates file with the secretary of state. The notice shall include the time and place of filing for those offices. Within ten days after notification by the secretary of state, each county auditor shall notify each municipal clerk in the county of all the offices to be voted for in the county at that

election and the time and place for filing for those offices. The county auditors and municipal clerks shall promptly post a copy of that notice in their offices.

(b) At least two weeks before the first day to file an affidavit of candidacy, the county auditor shall publish a notice stating the first and last dates on which affidavits of candidacy may be filed in the county auditor's office and the closing time for filing on the last day for filing. The county auditor shall post a similar notice at least ten days before the first day to file affidavits of candidacy.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 33; 1983 c 253 s 9; 1993 c 59 s 1; 2010 c 184 s 16

#### **204B.34 NOTICE OF ELECTION.**

Subdivision 1. **State elections.** At least 15 days before any state primary or state general election the municipal clerk shall post in the clerk's office a notice stating the officers to be nominated or elected, the location of each polling place in the municipality, and the hours for voting. An optional provision of the notice may include municipal officers to be nominated or elected. The county auditor shall post a similar notice in the auditor's office including information concerning any polling places in unorganized territory in the county. The governing body of a municipality or county may publish this notice in addition to posting it. Failure to give the notice required in this section shall not invalidate a state primary or state general election.

Subd. 2. **Municipal elections.** Notice of municipal elections shall be given as provided in sections 205.13, subdivision 2; and 205.16, subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Judicial elections.** When one or more justices of the Supreme Court or judges of the Court of Appeals or of a district court are to be nominated at the same primary or elected at the same general election, the notice of election shall state the name of each justice or judge whose successor is to be nominated or elected.

Subd. 4. **School district elections.** Notice of school district elections shall be given as provided in sections 205A.06, subdivision 2; and 205A.07, subdivision 1.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 34; 1982 c 501 s 15; 1983 c 247 s 86; 1983 c 303 s 10; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 32; 1998 c 254 art 2 s 23

#### **204B.35 PREPARATION OF BALLOTS.**

Subdivision 1. **Application.** All ballots for every election shall be prepared in accordance with sections 204B.35 to 204B.44 and chapter 204D, except for voting machine ballots or as otherwise provided by law.

Subd. 2. **Manner of preparation.** Ballots shall be prepared in a manner that enables the voters to understand which questions are to be voted upon and the identity and number of candidates to be voted for in each office and to designate their choices easily and accurately. The name of a candidate shall not appear on a ballot in any way that gives the candidate an advantage over an opponent, including words descriptive of the candidate's occupation, qualifications, principles, or opinions, except as otherwise provided by law.

Subd. 3. **Number.** The official in charge of preparing ballots shall prepare a sufficient number of ballots:

(a) to fill applications of absentee voters; and

(b) to provide each precinct with a sufficient number of ballots of each kind as required by section 204B.29, subdivision 1.

Subd. 4. **Absentee ballots; preparation; delivery.** At least 46 days before a regularly scheduled election for federal, state, county, city, or school board office or a special election for federal office, and at least 30 days before any other election, ballots necessary to fill applications of absentee voters shall be prepared and delivered to the officials who administer the provisions of chapter 203B.

This section applies to school district elections held on the same day as a statewide election or an election for a county or municipality located partially or wholly within the school district.

Subd. 5. **Combined local elections.** Municipalities shall determine the voting method in combined local elections when other election jurisdictions located wholly or partially within the municipality schedule elections on the same date as the regular municipal primary or general election.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 35; 1983 c 303 s 11; 1985 c 72 s 3; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 475 s 14; 1987 c 62 s 4; 1987 c 266 art 1 s 33; 1991 c 227 s 15; 2010 c 184 s 17

### 204B.36 BALLOTS; FORM.

Subdivision 1. **Type.** All ballots shall be printed with black ink on paper of sufficient thickness to prevent the printing from being discernible from the back. All ballots of the same color shall be substantially uniform in style of printing, size, thickness and shade of color. When the ballots of a particular color vary in shade, those used in any one precinct shall be of the same shade. All ballots shall be printed in easily readable type with suitable lines dividing candidates, offices, instructions and other matter printed on ballots. The name of each candidate shall be printed in capital letters. The same type shall be used for the names of all candidates on the same ballot.

Subd. 2. **Candidates and offices.** The name of each candidate shall be printed at a right angle to the length of the ballot. At a general election the name of the political party or the political principle of each candidate for partisan office shall be printed above or below the name of the candidate. The name of a political party or a political principle shall be printed in capital and lowercase letters of the same type, with the capital letters at least one-half the height of the capital letters used for names of the candidates. At a general election, blank lines containing the words "write-in, if any" shall be printed below the name of the last candidate for each office, or below the title of the office if no candidate has filed for that office, so that a voter may write in the names of individuals whose names are not on the ballot. One blank line shall be printed for each officer of that kind to be elected. At a primary election, no blank lines shall be provided for writing in the names of individuals whose names do not appear on the primary ballot.

On the left side of the ballot at the same level with the name of each candidate and each blank line shall be printed a square in which the voter may designate a vote by a mark (X). Each square shall be the same size. Above the first name on each ballot shall be printed the words, "Put an (X) in the square opposite the name of each candidate you wish to vote for." At the same level with these words and directly above the squares shall be printed a small arrow pointing downward. Directly underneath the official title of each office shall be printed the words "Vote for one" or "Vote for up to ..." (any greater number to be elected).

Subd. 3. **Question; form of ballot.** When a question is to be submitted to a vote, a concise statement of the nature of the question shall be printed on the ballot. The words, "YES" and "NO" shall be printed to the left of this statement, with a square to the left of each word so that the voter may indicate by a mark (X) either a negative or affirmative vote. The ballot shall include

instructions directing the voter to put an (X) in the square before the word "YES" if the voter desires to vote for the question, or to put an (X) before the word "NO" if the voter desires to vote against the question.

Subd. 4. **Judicial candidates.** The official ballot shall contain the names of all candidates for each judicial office and shall state the number of those candidates for whom a voter may vote. Each seat for an associate justice, associate judge, or judge of the district court must be numbered. The words "SUPREME COURT," "COURT OF APPEALS," and "(number) DISTRICT COURT" must be printed above the respective judicial office groups on the ballot. The title of each judicial office shall be printed on the official primary and general election ballot as follows:

(a) In the case of the Supreme Court:

"Chief justice";

"Associate justice (number)";

(b) In the case of the Court of Appeals:

"Judge (number)"; or

(c) In the case of the district court:

"Judge (number)."

Subd. 5. **Designation of incumbent; judicial offices.** If a chief justice, associate justice, or judge is a candidate to succeed again, the word "incumbent" shall be printed after that judge's name as a candidate.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 36; 1983 c 247 s 87; 1983 c 253 s 10; 1984 c 560 s 14; 1986 c 362 s 4; 1986 c 444; 1991 c 221 s 1; 1993 c 318 art 2 s 45; 1997 c 147 s 35; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 22

#### **204B.37 BACK OF BALLOT.**

On the back of all ballots shall be printed the words "Official Ballot", the date of the election and lines for the initials of at least two election judges. The words shall be printed so that they will be visible when the ballot is properly folded for deposit in the ballot box.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 37

#### **204B.38 NAMES ON BALLOTS; IDENTICAL DESCRIPTIVE WORDS.**

When the similarity of both the first and last names of two or more candidates for the same office at the same election may cause confusion to voters, up to three additional words may be printed on the ballot after each surname to indicate the candidate's occupation, office, residence or any combination of them if the candidate furnishes the identifying words to the filing officer by the last day for withdrawal of candidacy.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 38; 2010 c 201 s 32

#### **204B.39 SUBSTITUTE BALLOTS.**

If a sufficient number of official ballots are not delivered or if the official ballots are stolen or destroyed and a sufficient number of official ballots cannot be procured, the official in charge of preparing the official ballots shall prepare substitute ballots in the form prescribed by this section. The substitute ballots shall be prepared in the same form as official ballots as far as practicable. The word "Substitute" shall be printed in brackets immediately above the words "Official Ballot." When the substitute ballots are delivered to the municipal clerks or election judges they shall be accompanied by an initialed affidavit of the officer preparing them. The affidavit shall state that

the substitute ballots have been prepared and furnished in the manner prescribed by this section and shall state the reason why sufficient official ballots were not ready for delivery. The election judges shall include this affidavit with the election returns from that precinct.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 39

#### **204B.40 BALLOTS; ELECTION RECORDS AND OTHER MATERIALS; DISPOSITION; INSPECTION OF BALLOTS.**

The county auditors, municipal clerks, and school district clerks shall retain all election materials returned to them after any election for at least 22 months from the date of that election. All election materials involved in a contested election must be retained for 22 months or until the contest has been finally determined, whichever is later. Abstracts filed by canvassing boards shall be retained permanently by any officer with whom those abstracts are filed. Election materials no longer required to be retained pursuant to this section shall be disposed of in accordance with sections 138.163 to 138.21. Sealed envelopes containing voted ballots must be retained unopened, except as provided in this section, in a secure location. The county auditor, municipal clerk, or school district clerk shall not permit any voted ballots to be tampered with or defaced.

After the time for filing a notice of contest for an election has passed, the secretary of state may, for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating election procedures: (1) open the sealed ballot envelopes and inspect the ballots for that election maintained by the county auditors, municipal clerks, or school district clerks; (2) inspect the polling place rosters and completed voter registration applications; or (3) examine other forms required in the Minnesota election laws for use in the polling place. No inspected ballot or document may be marked or identified in any manner. After inspection, all ballots must be returned to the ballot envelope and the ballot envelope must be securely resealed. Any other election materials inspected or examined must be secured or resealed. No polling place roster may be inspected until the voting history for that precinct has been posted. No voter registration application may be inspected until the information on it has been entered into the statewide registration system.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 40; 1987 c 175 s 7; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 10; 1995 c 8 s 4; 2000 c 467 s 19; 2006 c 242 s 19

#### **204B.41 VACANCY IN NOMINATION; CHANGING BALLOTS.**

When a vacancy in nomination occurs through the death or catastrophic illness of a candidate after the 16th day before the general election, the officer in charge of preparing the ballots shall prepare and distribute a sufficient number of separate paper ballots which shall be headed with the words "OFFICIAL SUPPLEMENTAL BALLOT." This ballot shall contain the title of the office for which the vacancy in nomination has been filled and the names of all the candidates nominated for that office. The ballot shall conform to the provisions governing the printing of other official ballots as far as practicable. The title of the office and the names of the candidates for that office shall be blotted out or stricken from the regular ballots by the election judges. The official supplemental ballot shall be given to each voter when the voter is given the regular ballot or is directed to the voting machine. Regular ballots shall not be changed nor shall official supplemental ballots be prepared as provided in this section during the six calendar days before an election. Absentee ballots that have been mailed prior to the preparation of official supplemental ballots shall be counted in the same manner as if the vacancy had not occurred. Both an official supplemental ballot and a replacement regular ballot from which the title of the office and names of the candidates for that office have been blotted out or stricken as provided in



this section must be provided to each absentee voter or voter residing in a precinct voting by mail who requests either of them under section 203B.06, subdivision 3. The election judges conducting absentee voting in health care facilities as provided in section 203B.11, subdivision 1, must deliver official supplemental ballots and replacement regular ballots to those facilities no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the election.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 41; 1986 c 444; 1991 c 320 s 13; 2004 c 293 art 2 s 23

#### **204B.42 PAPER COLOR FOR SAMPLE BALLOTS; PENALTY.**

No sample ballot shall be printed on paper of the same color as any official ballots except when printed in black ink on white paper and appearing in a newspaper as news matter. A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 42

#### **204B.43 UNLAWFUL PRINTING OR DISTRIBUTION OF BALLOTS; PENALTY.**

Every person authorized or employed to print official ballots who knowingly gives or delivers those ballots to, or knowingly permits them to be taken by, any person other than the official under whose direction they are being printed, or who knowingly prints any ballot or causes or permits any ballot to be printed in a form other than that prescribed by law, or with any other names on it, or with the names of candidates or the titles of offices arranged or the names of candidates spelled in any way other than that authorized and directed by that official, is guilty of a felony.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 43

#### **204B.44 ERRORS AND OMISSIONS; REMEDY.**

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:

- (a) an error or omission in the placement or printing of the name or description of any candidate or any question on any official ballot;
- (b) any other error in preparing or printing any official ballot;
- (c) failure of the chair or secretary of the proper committee of a major political party to execute or file a certificate of nomination;
- (d) 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.

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, 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. 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.

**History:** 1981 c 29 art 4 s 44; 1986 c 444; 1990 c 453 s 6

**204B.45 MAIL BALLOTING.**

Subdivision 1. **Authorization.** A municipality having fewer than 400 registered voters on June 1 of an election year and not located in a metropolitan county as defined by section 473.121 may provide balloting by mail at any municipal, county, or state election with no polling place other than the office of the auditor or clerk or other locations designated by the auditor or clerk. The governing body may apply to the county auditor for permission to conduct balloting by mail. The county board may provide for balloting by mail in unorganized territory. The governing body of any municipality may designate for mail balloting any precinct having fewer than 50 registered voters, subject to the approval of the county auditor.

Voted ballots may be returned in person to any location designated by the county auditor or municipal clerk.

Subd. 1a. [Repealed, 2000 c 467 s 35]

Subd. 2. **Procedure.** Notice of the election and the special mail procedure must be given at least six weeks prior to the election. Not more than 46 days nor later than 14 days before a regularly scheduled election for federal, state, county, city, or school board office or a special election for federal office 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 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 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 staff trained as election judges. 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 e-mail 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 fourth 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.

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 resides. Any ballot received by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election must be counted.

*[See Note.]*

Subd. 3. **Election Law applied; rules.** The Minnesota Election Law is applicable to mail balloting except as provided by this section or by rules adopted by the secretary of state, but only paper ballots may be used. The secretary of state shall adopt rules for the conduct of mail balloting, including instructions to voters, procedures for challenge of voters, public observation of the counting of ballots, and procedures for proper handling and safeguarding of ballots to ensure the integrity of the election.

**History:** 1987 c 212 s 8; 1990 c 585 s 26; 1991 c 227 s 16; 1993 c 318 art 1 s 1; 1997 c 145 s 1; 2008 c 244 art 1 s 12; 2010 c 184 s 18; 2010 c 194 s 16

**NOTE:** Subdivision 2 was also amended by Laws 2010, chapter 184, section 18, to read as follows:

"Subd. 2. **Procedure.** Notice of the election and the special mail procedure must be given at least six weeks prior to the election. Not more than 46 days nor later than 14 days before a regularly scheduled election for federal, state, county, city, or school board office or a special election for federal office 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 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 may appoint election judges to examine the return envelopes and mark them "accepted" or "rejected" during the 45 days before the election. If an envelope has been rejected at least five days before the election, the ballots in the envelope must be considered spoiled ballots and the auditor or clerk shall provide the voter with a replacement ballot and return envelope in place of the spoiled ballot. The costs of the mailing shall be paid by the election jurisdiction in which the voter resides. Any ballot received by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election must be counted."

#### **204B.46 MAIL ELECTIONS; QUESTIONS.**

A county, municipality, or school district submitting questions to the voters at a special election may conduct an election by mail with no polling place other than the office of the auditor or clerk. No more than two questions may be submitted at a mail election and no offices may be voted on. Notice of the election must be given to the county auditor at least 53 days prior to the election. This notice shall also fulfill the requirements of Minnesota Rules, part 8210.3000. The special mail ballot procedures must be posted at least six weeks prior to the election. Not more than 30 nor later than 14 days prior to the election, the auditor or clerk shall mail ballots by nonforwardable mail to all voters registered in the county, municipality, or school district. No later than 14 days before the election, the auditor or clerk 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 pursuant to chapter 203B. The auditor or clerk must appoint a ballot board to examine the 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 staff trained as election judges. 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 must 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 e-mail 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 fourth 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 ballot board, and deposited in the appropriate ballot box.

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

No vote totals from ballots may be made public before the close of voting on election day.

**History:** 1987 c 213 s 1; 1989 c 291 art 1 s 11; 1993 c 223 s 11; 2008 c 295 s 13; 2009 c 88 art 6 s 4; 2010 c 180 s 4; 2010 c 194 s 17

#### **204B.47 ALTERNATIVE ELECTION PROCEDURES; DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.**

When a provision of the Minnesota Election Law cannot be implemented as a result of an order of a state or federal court, the secretary of state shall adopt alternative election procedures to permit the administration of any election affected by the order. The procedures may include the voting and handling of ballots cast after 8:00 p.m. as a result of a state or federal court order or any other order extending the time established by law for closing the polls. The alternative election procedures remain in effect until the first day of July following the next succeeding final adjournment of the legislature, unless otherwise provided by law or by court order.

**History:** 1997 c 147 s 36; 2004 c 293 art 1 s 29

#### **204B.48 VOTING EQUIPMENT GRANT ACCOUNT.**

Subdivision 1. **Account created.** A voting equipment grant account is created in the state treasury to provide grants to political subdivisions to purchase precinct based optical scan ballot tabulation equipment. The equipment must permit the voter to verify and correct any errors on the ballot, including both undervotes and overvotes. Any grants made by the federal government to the state to improve election administration or equipment must be credited to the account.

Subd. 2. **Application.** The commissioner of administration may make a grant from the account to a political subdivision only after receiving an application from the political subdivision and a recommendation from the secretary of state concerning the application. 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) if the current system is an optical scan system, the date the system 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) the proposed schedule for training election administrators and election judges to operate the new voting system;
- (12) a proposed plan to educate voters, the media, and the general public concerning the new voting system;
- (13) the names and contact information for the individuals and offices of the political subdivision responsible for communications and reporting to the commissioner of administration regarding the administration and implementation of the grant by the political subdivision, authorizing the purchase of voting systems, and implementing the training and education plan for the voting system;
- (14) whether the political subdivision has previously applied for a grant from the account and the disposition of that application;
- (15) a certified statement by the political subdivision that the grant will be used only to purchase precinct based optical scan ballot tabulation equipment, that the political subdivision will provide a dollar-for-dollar match that will not come from state or federal money, and that the political subdivision has insufficient resources to purchase the voting system without obtaining a grant from the account.

The commissioner of administration must forward a copy of the application to the secretary of state.

**Subd. 3. Evaluation and approval.** In evaluating the application, the commissioner of administration may consider only the information set forth in the application and is not subject to chapter 14. If the commissioner of administration 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 commissioner, after receiving the recommendation of the secretary of state, may approve the application.

**Subd. 4. Payment.** The commissioner of administration may then pay the grant to the political subdivision after certifying that:

- (1) the grant will be used only to purchase the kind of ballot tabulation equipment prescribed by subdivision 1, which may include equipment that makes it possible for individuals with disabilities to cast a secret ballot;

(2) the political subdivision to receive the grant has insufficient resources available to purchase the equipment; and

(3) the recipient of the grant will provide a dollar-for-dollar match, which may not come from state or federal money.

**History:** *1Sp2001 c 10 art 18 s 26*