

House File 135 - Introduced

HOUSE FILE 135

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A BILL FOR

1 An Act allowing registered voters to make applications for
2 absentee ballots through electronic means and making
3 penalties applicable.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 47.2, Code 2021, is amended by adding the
2 following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 9. The commissioner shall provide for
4 the submission of electronic absentee ballot applications on
5 the commissioner's internet site pursuant to section 53.2,
6 subsection 1, paragraph "c".

7 Sec. 2. Section 53.2, subsection 1, Code 2021, is amended by
8 adding the following new paragraph:

9 NEW PARAGRAPH. c. A registered voter may apply to the
10 commissioner for an absentee ballot through electronic means
11 either through electronic mail sent to the commissioner or
12 through the commissioner's internet site. An electronic
13 application for an absentee ballot must be received by the
14 commissioner no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the
15 election. An electronic application for an absentee ballot
16 received by the commissioner more than seventy days prior to
17 the date of the election shall be retained by the commissioner
18 and processed in the same manner as an electronic application
19 received not more than seventy days before the date of the
20 election.

21 Sec. 3. Section 53.2, subsection 4, paragraph a, Code 2021,
22 is amended to read as follows:

23 a. To request an absentee ballot, a registered voter shall
24 provide:

25 (1) The name ~~and signature~~ of the registered voter.

26 (1A) For an application submitted pursuant to subsection 1,
27 paragraph "a" or "b", the signature of the registered voter.

28 (2) The registered voter's date of birth.

29 (3) The address at which the voter is registered to vote.

30 (4) The registered voter's voter verification number
31 or, for an application submitted pursuant to subsection 1,
32 paragraph "c", either the registered voter's voter verification
33 number or the last four numerals of the registered voter's
34 social security number.

35 (5) The name or date of the election for which the absentee

1 ballot is requested.

2 (6) Such other information as may be necessary to determine
3 the correct absentee ballot for the registered voter.

4 EXPLANATION

5 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
6 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

7 This bill allows registered voters to make applications for
8 absentee ballots through electronic means. Under the bill, a
9 registered voter may apply to the commissioner for an absentee
10 ballot either through electronic mail or through the county
11 commissioner of election's internet site.

12 An electronic application for an absentee ballot must be
13 received no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the
14 election. If the commissioner receives such an application
15 more than 70 days prior to the date of the election, the
16 commissioner is required to retain the application and process
17 it in the same manner as an electronic application received
18 not more than 70 days before the date of the election. These
19 provisions are the same as those for written applications under
20 current law.

21 An electronic application for an absentee ballot is
22 required to contain all of the same information as a written
23 application, except that such an application need not include a
24 signature and may include the last four digits of the voter's
25 social security number in lieu of a voter verification number.

26 Under current law, a person commits election misconduct
27 in the first degree if the person makes a false or untrue
28 statement in an application for an absentee ballot or makes or
29 signs a false certification or affidavit in connection with
30 an absentee ballot. Election misconduct in the first degree
31 is a class "D" felony. A class "D" felony is punishable by
32 confinement for no more than five years and a fine of at least
33 \$1,025 but not more than \$10,245.