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

NEW SUBSECTION. 9. The commissioner shall provide for the submission of electronic absentee ballot applications on the commissioner’s internet site pursuant to section 53.2, subsection 1, paragraph “c”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) The registered voter’s date of birth.

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

(4) The registered voter’s voter verification number or, for an application submitted pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph “c”, either the registered voter’s voter verification number or the last four numerals of the registered voter’s social security number.

(5) The name or date of the election for which the absentee
ballot is requested.

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

EXPLANATION

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

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

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

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

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