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[HF 2610](#) – Elections, Voting, Ballots, and Candidates (LSB6288HV)  
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Fiscal Note Version – New

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**Description**

[House File 2610](#) relates to duties of the office of the Secretary of State (SOS). The Bill is organized in seven divisions. As only Division IV and Division VI have estimated fiscal impacts, this **Fiscal Note** will focus only on those divisions.

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**Division IV — Absent Voters**

**Description and Background**

This Division eliminates the use of drop boxes for returning an absentee ballot and defines terms. This Division changes the timeline for a county commissioner of elections to mail an absentee ballot to no more than 22 days before an election and requires ballots to be received by 5:00 p.m. and be recorded as received by 11:59 p.m. on the day before an election. This Division requires a registered voter to subscribe to an affidavit on an affidavit envelope by signing the envelope and marking the registered voter's voter verification number. This Division also updates the contents of an absentee ballot.

Currently, Iowa Code section [53.8](#) allows county commissioners to mail absentee ballots no more than 20 days before an election. Iowa Code section [53.17](#) requires that ballots be counted if the return envelope is received in the commissioner's office before polls close on election day.

**Assumptions**

- All counties will need to purchase new envelopes as a result of new printing requirements.
- The estimated cost for newly printed envelopes is \$0.75 per ballot.
- According to the SOS, approximately 1.1 million absentee ballots were requested for the 2020 general election and approximately 382,000 absentee ballots were requested for the 2022 general election.
- Adding Intelligent Mail barcodes to the new envelopes is estimated to cost \$500 per 5,000 envelopes.
- The cost of replacement envelopes and ballots for voters who do not complete the voter verification field correctly cannot be calculated since the number that will be needed cannot be estimated.
- Return postage to be paid by the counties as a result of the elimination of drop boxes is expected to be minimal.

**Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of the new envelope requirements is dependent on the number of absentee ballots requested. Assuming the same or similar voter turnout to recent presidential and midterm elections, the cost increase for new envelope printing is estimated to be approximately \$800,000 for presidential election years and \$286,000 for midterm election years.

The fiscal impact of removing ballot drop boxes cannot be estimated.

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## Division VI — Voter Registration Database Pilot Program

### Description and Background

This Division creates a voter registration database verification pilot program. This Division requires the State registrar of voters to contract with a third-party vendor to develop or provide a program to verify ineligible voters on an ongoing basis. This Division requires the SOS, during the first quarter of 2025, to use the developed or acquired program to forward the results of the analysis of the voter registration file to each county commissioner of registration prior to the date reports are required to be submitted pursuant to Iowa Code section [48A.40](#). This Division also requires the State registrar of voters to evaluate the efficacy and costs of the pilot program as compared to the current method of maintaining the statewide voter registration database. The newly created Iowa Code section, Iowa Code section 47.7A, is repealed December 31, 2027.

Currently, Iowa Code section [47.7](#) allows the State registrar to contract with a third-party vendor to develop or provide a program to verify the status of records in the statewide voter registration file.

As of February 2024, there are approximately 2.2 million registered voters in the State of Iowa.

### Assumptions

- The SOS estimates vendor costs to develop a voter registration database that will be compared against the current method to be between \$0.05 and \$0.15 per voter. This may create a cost between approximately \$110,000 and \$331,000.
- Additional vendor and staff time to develop and make the comparison file is estimated to be approximately \$25,000.

### Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact of Division VI is estimated to increase expenditures for the SOS by approximately \$135,000 and \$356,000 for each year of the two-year pilot program.

### Sources

Secretary of State  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
Legislative Services Agency

/s/ Jennifer Acton

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The fiscal note for this Bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.

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