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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

H. F. No. **3549**

03/23/2016 Authored by Sanders

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Elections Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to elections; establishing a presidential primary; modifying provisions
1.3 related to the precinct caucuses; making technical and conforming changes;
1.4 amending Minnesota Statutes 2014, sections 201.091, subdivision 4; 202A.14,
1.5 subdivision 1; 202A.18, subdivision 2a; 204B.14, subdivisions 2, 4; 204C.10;
1.6 204D.09, subdivision 1; Minnesota Statutes 2015 Supplement, section 204C.04,
1.7 subdivision 2; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 207A.

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

1.9 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 201.091, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

1.10 Subd. 4. **Public information lists.** The county auditor shall make available for
1.11 inspection a public information list which must contain the name, address, year of birth, and
1.12 voting history of each registered voter in the county. The list must include the party choice
1.13 of any voter who voted in the most recent presidential primary. The telephone number must
1.14 be included on the list if provided by the voter. The public information list may also include
1.15 information on voting districts. The county auditor may adopt reasonable rules governing
1.16 access to the list. No individual inspecting the public information list shall tamper with
1.17 or alter it in any manner. No individual who inspects the public information list or who
1.18 acquires a list of registered voters prepared from the public information list may use any
1.19 information contained in the list for purposes unrelated to elections, political activities, or
1.20 law enforcement. The secretary of state may provide copies of the public information lists
1.21 and other information from the statewide registration system for uses related to elections,
1.22 political activities, or in response to a law enforcement inquiry from a public official
1.23 concerning a failure to comply with any criminal statute or any state or local tax statute.

1.24 Before inspecting the public information list or obtaining a list of voters or other
1.25 information from the list, the individual shall provide identification to the public official

2.1 having custody of the public information list and shall state in writing that any information
2.2 obtained from the list will not be used for purposes unrelated to elections, political
2.3 activities, or law enforcement. Requests to examine or obtain information from the public
2.4 information lists or the statewide registration system must be made and processed in the
2.5 manner provided in the rules of the secretary of state.

2.6 Upon receipt of a statement signed by the voter that withholding the voter's name
2.7 from the public information list is required for the safety of the voter or the voter's family,
2.8 the secretary of state and county auditor must withhold from the public information list the
2.9 name of a registered voter.

2.10 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 202A.14, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

2.11 Subdivision 1. **Time and manner of holding; postponement.** (a) In every state
2.12 general election year, beginning at 7:00 p.m. on the date established pursuant to paragraph
2.13 (b), there shall be held for every election precinct a party caucus in the manner provided
2.14 in sections 202A.14 to 202A.19.

2.15 (b)(1) The chairs of the two largest major political parties shall jointly submit to
2.16 the secretary of state, no later than March 1 of each odd-numbered year, the single date
2.17 on which the two parties have agreed to conduct their precinct caucuses in the next
2.18 even-numbered year. For a year when a presidential primary is scheduled, the date
2.19 submitted must not be the date of the presidential primary, or the town general election
2.20 date provided in section 205.075, subdivision 1.

2.21 (2) Within two business days after the parties have agreed on a single date on which
2.22 to conduct their precinct caucuses, the secretary of state shall publicly announce the
2.23 official state precinct caucus date for the following general election year.

2.24 (3) If the chairs of the two largest major political parties do not jointly submit a
2.25 single date for conducting their precinct caucuses as provided in this paragraph, then for
2.26 purposes of the next general election year, one of the first Tuesday in February following
2.27 dates shall be considered the day of a major political party precinct caucus and sections
2.28 202A.19 and 202A.192 shall only apply on that date;

2.29 (i) the first Tuesday in February in a year when no presidential primary is required; or

2.30 (ii) the Tuesday immediately prior to the presidential primary in a year when a
2.31 presidential primary is required.

2.32 (4) For purposes of this paragraph, the two largest major political parties shall be the
2.33 parties whose candidates for governor received the greatest and second greatest number of
2.34 votes at the most recent gubernatorial election.

3.1 (c) In the event of severe weather a major political party may request the secretary of
3.2 state to postpone caucuses. If a major political party makes a request, or upon the secretary
3.3 of state's own initiative, after consultation with all major political parties and on the advice
3.4 of the federal Weather Bureau and the Department of Transportation, the secretary of state
3.5 may declare precinct caucuses to be postponed for a week in counties where weather
3.6 makes travel especially dangerous. The secretary of state shall submit a notice of the
3.7 postponement to news media covering the affected counties by 6:00 p.m. on the scheduled
3.8 day of the caucus. A postponed caucus may also be postponed pursuant to this subdivision.

3.9 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 202A.18, subdivision 2a, is amended to read:

3.10 Subd. 2a. **Preference ballot.** Prior to the opening of nominations for the election of
3.11 permanent offices and delegates, a ballot must be distributed to permit caucus participants
3.12 to indicate their preference for the ~~offices of president of the United States or~~ office of
3.13 the governor. The results of preference voting must be reported to the secretary of state
3.14 immediately upon conclusion of the voting, in the manner provided by the secretary of
3.15 state. The secretary of state shall provide the appropriate forms to the party for reporting
3.16 the results.

3.17 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 204B.14, subdivision 2, is amended to read:

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

3.20 (1) each city ward; and

3.21 (2) each town and each statutory city.

3.22 (b) A single, accessible, combined polling place may be established no later than
3.23 November 1 if a presidential primary is scheduled to occur in the following year or May 1
3.24 of any other year:

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

3.27 (2) for contiguous precincts in the same municipality;

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

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

3.31 A copy of the ordinance or resolution establishing a combined polling place must
3.32 be filed with the county auditor within 30 days after approval by the governing body. A
3.33 polling place combined under clause (3) must be approved by the governing body of each
3.34 participating municipality. A polling place combined under clause (4) must be approved

4.1 by the governing body of each participating municipality and the secretary of state and
4.2 may be located outside any of the noncontiguous precincts. A municipality withdrawing
4.3 from participation in a combined polling place must do so by filing a resolution of
4.4 withdrawal with the county auditor no later than October 1 if a presidential primary is
4.5 scheduled to occur in the following year or April 1 of any other year.

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

4.17 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 204B.14, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

4.18 Subd. 4. **Boundary change procedure.** Any change in the boundary of an election
4.19 precinct must be adopted at least ten weeks before the date of the next election and, for the
4.20 state primary and general election or presidential primary, no later than ~~June~~ December
4.21 1 in the year prior to the year of the state general election. The precinct boundary
4.22 change shall not take effect until notice of the change has been posted in the office of the
4.23 municipal clerk or county auditor for at least 56 days.

4.24 The county auditor must publish a notice illustrating or describing the congressional,
4.25 legislative, and county commissioner district boundaries in the county in one or more
4.26 qualified newspapers in the county at least 14 days before the first day to file affidavits of
4.27 candidacy for the state general election in the year ending in two.

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

4.33 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2015 Supplement, section 204C.04, subdivision 2, is
4.34 amended to read:

5.1 Subd. 2. **Elections covered.** For purposes of this section, "election" means a
5.2 regularly scheduled election, an election to fill a vacancy in the office of United States
5.3 senator or United States representative, an election to fill a vacancy in nomination for a
5.4 constitutional office, ~~or~~ an election to fill a vacancy in the office of state senator or state
5.5 representative, or a presidential primary under chapter 207A.

5.6 Sec. 7. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 204C.10, is amended to read:

5.7 **204C.10 PERMANENT REGISTRATION; VERIFICATION OF**
5.8 **REGISTRATION.**

5.9 (a) An individual seeking to vote shall sign a polling place roster or voter signature
5.10 certificate which states that the individual is at least 18 years of age, a citizen of the United
5.11 States, has resided in Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding the election, maintains
5.12 residence at the address shown, is not under a guardianship in which the court order
5.13 revokes the individual's right to vote, has not been found by a court of law to be legally
5.14 incompetent to vote or has the right to vote because, if the individual was convicted of
5.15 a felony, the felony sentence has expired or been completed or the individual has been
5.16 discharged from the sentence, is registered and has not already voted in the election. The
5.17 roster must also state: "I understand that deliberately providing false information is a felony
5.18 punishable by not more than five years imprisonment and a fine of not more than \$10,000,
5.19 or both." At the presidential primary, the polling place roster must also state: "I am in
5.20 general agreement with the principles of the party for whose candidate I intend to vote."

5.21 (b) A judge may, before the applicant signs the roster or voter signature certificate,
5.22 confirm the applicant's name, address, and date of birth.

5.23 (c) After the applicant signs the roster or voter signature certificate, the judge shall
5.24 give the applicant a voter's receipt. The voter shall deliver the voter's receipt to the judge
5.25 in charge of ballots as proof of the voter's right to vote, and thereupon the judge shall
5.26 hand to the voter the ballot. The voters' receipts must be maintained during the time for
5.27 notice of filing an election contest.

5.28 Sec. 8. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 204D.09, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

5.29 Subdivision 1. **Example ballot.** ~~(a)~~ No later than May 1 of each year, the secretary
5.30 of state shall supply each auditor with a copy of an example ballot to be used at the state
5.31 primary and state general election. The example ballot must illustrate the format required
5.32 for the ballots used in the primary and general elections that year. ~~(b)~~ The county auditor
5.33 shall distribute copies of the example ballot to municipal and school district clerks in

6.1 municipalities and school districts holding elections that year. The official ballot must
6.2 conform in all respects to the example ballot.

6.3 **Sec. 9. [207A.11] PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ESTABLISHED.**

6.4 (a) A presidential primary must be held each year in which a president and vice
6.5 president of the United States are to be nominated and elected.

6.6 (b) The party chairs must jointly submit to the secretary of state, no later than March
6.7 1 in a year prior to a presidential election year, the single date on which the parties
6.8 have agreed to conduct the presidential primary in the next year. If a date is not jointly
6.9 submitted by the deadline, the presidential primary must be held on the first Tuesday in
6.10 March in the year of the presidential primary. No other election may be conducted on the
6.11 date of the presidential primary.

6.12 (c) The secretary of state, in consultation with the party chairs, must adopt rules to
6.13 implement the provisions of this chapter.

6.14 (d) For purposes of this chapter, "political party" or "party" means a major political
6.15 party as defined in section 200.02, subdivision 7.

6.16 **Sec. 10. [207A.12] CONDUCTING PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.**

6.17 (a) Except as otherwise provided by law, the presidential primary must be conducted,
6.18 and the results canvassed and returned, in the manner provided by law for the state primary.

6.19 (b) An individual seeking to vote at the presidential primary must be registered to
6.20 vote pursuant to section 201.054, subdivision 1. The voter must request the ballot of the
6.21 party for whose candidate the individual wishes to vote. Notwithstanding section 204C.18,
6.22 subdivision 1, the election judge must record in the polling place roster the name of the
6.23 political party whose ballot the voter requested. When posting voter history pursuant to
6.24 section 201.171, the county auditor must include the name of the political party whose
6.25 ballot the voter requested.

6.26 (c) Immediately after the state canvassing board declares the results of the
6.27 presidential primary, the secretary of state must notify the chair of each party of the results.

6.28 (d) The results of the presidential primary must bind the election of delegates
6.29 in each party.

6.30 **Sec. 11. [207A.13] FORM OF BALLOTS; CANDIDATES ON BALLOT.**

6.31 Subdivision 1. **Form.** (a) Except as provided by law, presidential primary ballots
6.32 shall be printed in the same manner as state primary ballots as far as practicable. A
6.33 sufficient number of each ballot shall be printed for each precinct and ward in the state.

7.1 (b) There must be separate ballots for the names of the candidates of each political
7.2 party. Each ballot must be headed by the words "Presidential Primary Ballot." The
7.3 heading must also indicate the party that appears on the ballot.

7.4 (c) The ballot for each political party must contain a place for a voter to indicate a
7.5 preference for having delegates to the party's national convention remain uncommitted
7.6 and a blank line printed below the other choices on the ballot so that a voter may write in
7.7 the name of a person who is not listed on the ballot.

7.8 Subd. 2. **Candidates on the ballot.** (a) Each party must determine which candidates
7.9 are to be placed on the presidential primary ballot for that party. The chair of each party
7.10 must submit to the secretary of state the names of the candidates to appear on the ballot for
7.11 that party no later than 63 days before the presidential primary. Once submitted, changes
7.12 must not be made to the candidates that will appear on the ballot.

7.13 (b) No later than the seventh day before the presidential primary, the chair of
7.14 each party must submit to the secretary of state the names of any write-in candidates to
7.15 be counted for that party.

7.16 Sec. 12. **[207A.14] NOTICE OF PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY; SAMPLE**
7.17 **BALLOTS.**

7.18 Subdivision 1. **Notice of primary to counties and municipalities.** Twenty weeks
7.19 before a presidential primary is to be held, the secretary of state shall provide notice to the
7.20 county auditor of each county of the date of the presidential primary. Within ten days after
7.21 notification by the secretary of state, each county auditor shall provide notice of the date
7.22 of the presidential primary to each municipal clerk in the county.

7.23 Subd. 2. **Sample ballots.** No later than 70 days before the presidential primary,
7.24 the secretary of state must supply each county auditor with sample ballots to be used at
7.25 the presidential primary. The sample ballots must illustrate the format required for the
7.26 ballots used in the presidential primary.

7.27 Subd. 3. **Notice of primary to public.** At least 15 days before the date of the
7.28 presidential primary, each municipal clerk shall post a public notice stating the date of
7.29 the presidential primary, the location of each polling place in the municipality, and the
7.30 hours during which the polling places in the municipality will be open. The county
7.31 auditor shall post a similar notice in the auditor's office with information for any polling
7.32 places in unorganized territory in the county. The governing body of a municipality or
7.33 county may publish the notice in addition to posting it. Failure to give notice does not
7.34 invalidate the election.

8.1 Sec. 13. **[207A.15] REIMBURSEMENT OF ELECTION EXPENSES.**

8.2 Subdivision 1. Reimbursement by secretary of state. The secretary of state shall
8.3 reimburse the counties and municipalities for expenses incurred in the administration of
8.4 the presidential primary from money appropriated by the legislature for this purpose, as
8.5 provided in this section. Up to \$..... of the appropriation for reimbursement of election
8.6 expenses may be retained by the secretary of state to administer the reimbursement
8.7 program.

8.8 Subd. 2. Reimbursable expenses. The following expenses are eligible for
8.9 reimbursement: preparation and printing of ballots; postage for absentee ballots;
8.10 publication of the sample ballot; preparation of polling places in an amount not to exceed
8.11 \$..... per polling place; preparation of electronic voting systems in an amount not to
8.12 exceed \$..... per precinct; compensation for temporary staff or overtime payments;
8.13 salaries of election judges; and compensation of county canvassing board members.

8.14 Subd. 3. Certification of costs. Within 60 days after the presidential primary, the
8.15 county auditor shall submit to the secretary of state a request for payment of the costs
8.16 incurred by the county for the presidential primary, and the municipal clerk shall submit
8.17 to the secretary of state a request for payment of the costs incurred by the municipality
8.18 for the presidential primary. The request for payment must be accompanied by an
8.19 itemized description of actual county or municipal expenditures, including copies of
8.20 invoices. In addition, the county auditor or municipal clerk must certify that the request
8.21 for reimbursement is based on actual costs incurred by the county or municipality in the
8.22 presidential primary. The secretary of state shall provide each county and municipality
8.23 with the appropriate forms for this certification. The secretary of state must not reimburse
8.24 expenses unless the certification of costs has been submitted as provided in this
8.25 subdivision. The secretary of state shall complete the issuance of reimbursements to the
8.26 counties and municipalities no later than 90 days after the presidential primary.

8.27 Subd. 4. Apportionment of reimbursements. If the total amount of requests from
8.28 all counties and municipalities for reimbursement of expenses exceeds the total amount
8.29 appropriated to the secretary of state for this purpose, the secretary of state shall apportion
8.30 the reimbursements to the counties and municipalities on the basis of the number of
8.31 persons in each jurisdiction registered to vote at 7:00 a.m. on the day of the presidential
8.32 primary as a fraction of the total number of persons registered to vote in the state at that
8.33 time in jurisdictions that request reimbursement.

8.34 Sec. 14. **EFFECTIVE DATE.**

9.1 This act is effective July 1, 2017, and applies to elections conducted on or after
9.2 that date.