

April 3, 2025

Chair Jim Carlson
Minnesota Senate Elections Committee

RE: Senate File 2384

Elections Committee Members,

We are writing to highlight our concerns regarding the absentee mail ballot cut-off deadlines presented in SF2384-A-8-DE. We thank the authors and the Office of the Secretary of State for their diligent efforts to enhance election procedures and appreciate making the online application expectations more realistic with a clear deadline. However, we hope the committee will be amenable to considering the timeframe and notification requirements portion of this amendment.

203B.04 Sec. 6. Subd 1 (a)(2) and 203B.04 Sec. 6 Subd 1(b) create a 5-day deadline for paper applications and instructs the Office of the Secretary of State to remove the electronic application 7-days prior to Election Day. Voters still have time to receive their mail ballot at this date of the election period and to drop it off (a method many of our voters choose to utilize).

A timeline that terminates on the Saturday of the Election (3-days prior) is more in-line with typical mail timing in our jurisdiction. Though, a notation on the queue about the uncertainty of mail delivery timelines would be welcomed, as it is more informative for voters. A realistic explanation so voters can decide whether they prefer to mail back their ballot or if they need to find someone to drop their ballot off for them would provide a positive service. However, completely eliminating the mailing out option at the 5-7 day mark will undoubtedly inhibit some from being able to participate in the election.

203B.04 Sec. 6. Subd 1 (d) extends contacting vote by mail applicants from 1-day to 5-days preceding the election. We have a considerable number of inbound applications still arriving at this point of the election. We also receive a considerable number of bulk paper applications dropped off from parties, candidates, campaigns, unions, etc. During the final week of the election we received 689 applications in 2024, 587 in 2022, 578 in 2021, and 1,116 in 2018. With this quantity of applicants, we would not be able to physically contact this number of individuals.

Additionally, we would like to comment that the change to 201.061 Subd 3a (e) is a welcome addition to proofs of residence for students (housing lists) to be utilized in the 18-day direct balloting/early voting period. However, we do not receive those materials from all of our universities in time to utilize them for this entire timeframe. We have received some of these lists so late as to deploy them on election morning prior to the opening of polls. A more streamlined and standardized format of the lists that includes precinct information or allows for quicker precincting as well as an earlier deadline for the lists to be provided would facilitate this provision.

Lastly, the change to 203B.121 Subd 1 which exempts counties from political party balance in appointment of election judges in elections not held in conjunction with state elections should equally be applied to all non-partisan jurisdictions including cities and school districts.



Katie Smith
Minneapolis Director of Elections & Voter Services