

From the Chairman – August 2017

Before you start reading too far into this article, the information that I will be sharing with you, was taken from an article in the June issue of the Iowa County magazine written by Heidi Burhans, Madison County Auditor, she has given me permission to use the article to share with the public.

With the start of the new Fiscal Year, July 1, 2017, new legislation has been implemented that will affect voters at the local/state level.

HF 471 – The county commissioner of elections (Auditor) may consolidate precincts for any elections. Previously, precinct consolidation was prohibited for the primary or general election or any special election held under Iowa Code 69.14.

HR516 – (Voter identity verification) Political parties and candidates must submit voter's registration application to the Auditor within seven (7) days of receiving them from the voters, within three (3) days of the pre-registration deadline, the application must be submitted within 24 hours of receipt. There had been no deadline prior to HF 516. Voter registration of a registered voter shall be cancelled if the voter's name is on the jury declination list due to non-residency of Iowa or non-citizenship of the United State. A first-time voter who is registering at the polls on election day (Election Day Registration - EDR) and does not include a driver's license, nonoperator ID or a Social Security number on the voter registration application must provide proof of identity and of residency when voting. Residential leases and property tax statement have been added to the list of allowable proof of residency for this type of EDR voter.

Regarding Election Day Registration (EDR) a Veteran's ID card will be allowed to established identity and residency. Proof of residency documents must be current within 45 days of the election, and residential lease dates must include the date of the election. EDR attestors must also show proof of identification (same as requires for voter identification). EDR voters must be verified against the felon database which means that in the counties without e-pollbooks, all EDR voters will vote provisional ballots. In counties with e-pollbooks, only a voter appearing in the database can be challenged. Deadline to send EDR acknowledgement to voter has been shortened from 45 days to 21 days.

Precinct Election Officials shall verify a voter's identity before furnishing a ballot to the voter. Voter identification includes driver's license, nonoperator ID, U.S. passport, U.S. military ID, or U.S. veteran's ID. From July 1, 2017 through January 1, 2019, this time period is referred to as a "soft rollout", voters without a driver's license or nonoperator ID will receive a voter ID card from the Secretary of the State. After that initial issuance, the Auditor will issue this ID to future registrants. (During the soft rollout period, if a voter cannot provide an ID, they must sign an Attestation form which will be repealed July 1, 2019). A voter new to a precinct must provide proof of identity and residency to update their registration address at the poll. Previously only a voter new to the county had to provide such proof. If a voter does not provide an ID at the poll and subsequently votes a provisional ballot, they must present an ID to the Auditor by the deadline or the provisional ballot will be rejected.

Absentee voting will also see some changes. The Auditor may dispute an absentee ballot form if the signature appears to have been signed by someone other than the registered voter in comparing it to the signature on record of the registered voter. An absentee ballot affidavit shall be considered defective if the signature appears to have been signed by someone other than the registered voter in comparing it to the signature on record of the registered voter. Each political party may appoint up to five (5) observers to witness the reviewing of absentee voter's affidavits. Previously only one observer per party was allowed in the room.

Also, effective January 1, 2018, concerning absentee voting. One hundred twenty (120) days prior to the election is the first date allowed for absentee ballots requests to be submitted to the Auditor, if the request arrives before the 120 days the Auditor must return the form along with a notice of acceptance date, to the voter. Twenty-nine (29) days prior to the election is the first date allowed for absentee ballots to be issued to voters. There is a change in the deadline to request an absentee ballot to be mailed, which went from four (4) days to now 10 or 11 days before the election. There needs to be a voters' verification number on the absentee ballot request form however for those residing in health care facilities the voter verification number is not required.

Beginning January 1, 2019, a person may register to vote at the age of 17, previously the age limit had been 17 and a half. The 17-year old registered voter may vote in the primary election if they will be 18 by the general election.

HF 566 allows for the combination of the School and City Elections which takes effect on July 1, 2019. As of now the elections of the directors of the local school districts, merged areas and area education agencies are held the second Tuesday in September however with the new legislation the school election will be move to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November same as the city election. With Iowa Code 39.2(4)(b) limited special elections dates for schools will also align with those for cities.

Some other changes include the elimination of the Straight Party Voting. Also, the Auditor will file a certificate within 20 days following a general election that the county met election requirements including equipment testing, PEO training, polling place accessibility, publication schedule, and complied with administrative rules.

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On a personal note: The voting article may have been a little boring to some however there are changes that you as voters need to be aware of and the right to vote is your voice.

Thanks to Fayette County Treasurer, Kyle Jacobsen, these articles are now being archived for your convenience so if you missed one you can certainly check the Fayette County website and pull up old article of "From the Chairman" starting with the March 2016 article. Hope you have and will continue to enjoyed them.

