

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA

ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

LEGISLATIVE BILL 646

FINAL READING

Introduced by Nelson, 6; Ashford, 20; Burling, 33; Carlson, 38; Cornett, 45; Dubas, 34; Erdman, 47; Fischer, 43; Friend, 10; Fulton, 29; Gay, 14; Nantkes, 46; Pahls, 31; Pankonin, 2; Pirsch, 4; Rogert, 16; Synowiecki, 7; White, 8; Kruse, 13; Lathrop, 12; McGill, 26; Mines, 18

Read first time January 17, 2007

Committee: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

A BILL

1 FOR AN ACT relating to elections; to amend sections 32-230, 32-232,
2 32-235, 32-612, 32-906, 32-1001, 32-1004, 32-1010, and
3 32-1049, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and
4 sections 32-808, 32-904, 32-909, 32-1002, 32-1027, and
5 32-1041, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2006; to
6 change provisions relating to changing political parties
7 and issuing ballots for early voting; to change and
8 eliminate provisions relating to the use and counting of
9 ballots; to harmonize provisions; to repeal the original
10 sections; and to outright repeal sections 32-224, 32-234,

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1 32-1011, 32-1019, 32-1020, 32-1021, 32-1022, 32-1023,
2 32-1024, and 32-1025, Reissue Revised Statutes of
3 Nebraska, and section 32-1026, Reissue Revised Statutes
4 of Nebraska, as amended by section 3, Legislative Bill
5 44, One Hundredth Legislature, First Session, 2007.

6 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 32-230, Reissue Revised Statutes of
2 Nebraska, is amended to read:

3 32-230 (1) As provided in subsection (5) of this section,
4 the precinct committeeman and committeewoman of each political
5 party shall appoint a receiving board consisting of three judges
6 of election and two clerks of election except as provided in
7 subsection (3) of this section, ~~and a counting board if required~~
8 ~~pursuant to section 32-234 consisting of two judges of election~~
9 ~~and two clerks of election.~~ The chairperson of the county central
10 committee of each political party shall send the names of the
11 appointments to the county clerk no later than February 1 prior to
12 the primary election.

13 (2) If no names are submitted by the chairperson, the
14 county clerk shall appoint judges or clerks of election from the
15 appropriate political party. Judges and clerks of election may be
16 selected at random from a cross section of the population of the
17 county. All qualified citizens shall have the opportunity to be
18 considered for service. All qualified citizens shall fulfill their
19 obligation to serve as judges or clerks of election as prescribed
20 by the county clerk. No citizen shall be excluded from service as
21 a result of discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex,
22 national origin, or economic status. No citizen shall be excluded
23 from service unless excused by reason of ill health or other good
24 and sufficient reason.

25 (3) In precincts in which electronic voting systems are

1 used, the receiving board shall have at least three members.

2 (4) The county clerk may allow persons serving on a
3 receiving board to serve for part of the time the polls are open
4 and appoint other persons to serve on the same receiving board for
5 the remainder of the time the polls are open.

6 (5) In each precinct at any one time, one judge and
7 one clerk of election shall be appointed from the political party
8 casting the highest number of votes in the county for Governor or
9 for President of the United States in the immediately preceding
10 general election, one judge and one clerk shall be appointed from
11 the political party casting the next highest number of votes in
12 the county for Governor or for President of the United States in
13 the immediately preceding general election, and one judge shall
14 be appointed from the political party casting the third highest
15 number of votes in the county for Governor or for President of
16 the United States in the immediately preceding general election.
17 If the political party casting the third highest number of votes
18 cast less than ten percent of the total vote cast in the county
19 at the immediately preceding general election, the political party
20 casting the highest number of votes at the immediately preceding
21 general election shall be entitled to two judges and one clerk. ~~If~~
22 ~~a counting board is required pursuant to section 32-234, one judge~~
23 ~~and one clerk of election shall be appointed to be members of the~~
24 ~~counting board from the political party casting the highest number~~
25 ~~of votes for Governor or for President of the United States in the~~

1 county in the immediately preceding general election and one judge
2 and one clerk of election shall be appointed to be members of the
3 counting board from the political party casting the next highest
4 number of votes.

5 (6) The county clerk may appoint registered voters to
6 serve in case of a vacancy among any of the judges or clerks of
7 election or in addition to the judges and clerks in any precinct
8 when necessary to meet any situation that requires additional
9 judges and clerks. Such appointees may include registered voters
10 unaffiliated with any political party. Such appointees shall serve
11 at subsequent or special elections as determined by the county
12 clerk.

13 (7) The county clerk may appoint a person who is at
14 least sixteen years old but is not eligible to register to vote
15 as a clerk of election. Such clerk of election shall meet the
16 requirements of subsection (1) of section 32-231, except that
17 such clerk shall not be required to be a registered voter. No
18 more than one clerk of election appointed under this subsection
19 shall serve at any precinct. A clerk of election appointed under
20 this subsection shall be considered a registered voter who is not
21 affiliated with a political party for purposes of this section.

22 Sec. 2. Section 32-232, Reissue Revised Statutes of
23 Nebraska, is amended to read:

24 32-232 (1) Any clerk of election may perform the duties
25 of a judge of election, and any judge of election may perform the

1 duties of a clerk of election. The county clerk may excuse two
2 clerks of election from serving at any election, and the judges of
3 election shall perform such duties without additional compensation.

4 (2) The county clerk shall designate one of the members
5 of the receiving board as a messenger. The messenger shall receive
6 from the county clerk the ballots and other equipment necessary
7 for holding the election in the precinct for which he or she is
8 a judge or clerk and shall deliver them to the polling place in
9 his or her precinct at least one hour before the time provided by
10 section 32-908 for opening the polls. The messenger shall return
11 the ballots and other equipment to the county clerk as soon as
12 possible after the votes are counted. ~~In precincts which have a~~
13 ~~counting board, a messenger shall be designated by the county clerk~~
14 ~~from the members of the counting board to return the ballots and~~
15 ~~equipment to the county clerk.~~

16 Sec. 3. Section 32-235, Reissue Revised Statutes of
17 Nebraska, is amended to read:

18 32-235 (1) The county clerk shall, by mail, notify judges
19 and clerks of election, district inspectors, members of counting
20 boards, and members of canvassing boards of their appointment. The
21 notice shall inform the appointee of his or her appointment and of
22 the date and time he or she is required to report to the office
23 of the county clerk or other designated location and the polling
24 place. The notice shall be mailed at least fifteen days prior to
25 each statewide primary and general election. The county clerk shall

1 order the members of the receiving board ~~and the members of the~~
2 ~~counting board~~ to appear at their respective polling place on the
3 day and at the hour specified in the notice of appointment.

4 (2) Each appointee shall, at the time fixed in the notice
5 of appointment, report to the office or other location to complete
6 any informational forms and receive training regarding his or her
7 duties. The training shall include instruction as required by the
8 Secretary of State and any other training deemed necessary by the
9 county clerk.

10 Sec. 4. Section 32-612, Reissue Revised Statutes of
11 Nebraska, is amended to read:

12 32-612 (1) A change of political party affiliation by a
13 registered voter so as to affiliate with the political party named
14 in the candidate filing form or in an affidavit as a write-in
15 candidate pursuant to section 32-615 after the first Friday in
16 December prior to the statewide primary election shall not be
17 effective to meet the requirements of section 32-610 or 32-611 or
18 subsection (4) of this section, except that any person may change
19 his or her political party affiliation after the first Friday
20 in December prior to the statewide primary election to become a
21 candidate of a new political party which has successfully completed
22 the petition process required by section 32-716.

23 (2) No registered voter, candidate, or proposed candidate
24 shall swear falsely as to political party affiliation or shall
25 swear that he or she affiliates with two or more political parties.

1 Any candidate who swears falsely as to political party affiliation
2 or swears that he or she affiliates with two or more political
3 parties shall not be the candidate of such party and shall not be
4 entitled to assume the office for which he or she filed even if he
5 or she receives a majority or plurality of the votes therefor at
6 the following general election.

7 (3) The name of a candidate shall not appear printed
8 on more than one political party ballot. A candidate who is a
9 registered voter of one political party shall not accept the
10 nomination of another political party.

11 (4) In order to count write-in votes on a political party
12 ballot in the primary election, the candidate who receives the
13 votes must be a registered voter of that political party unless the
14 political party allows candidates not affiliated with the party by
15 not adopting a rule under section 32-702.

16 Sec. 5. Section 32-808, Revised Statutes Cumulative
17 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

18 32-808 (1) Ballots for early voting and applications
19 shall be ready for delivery to registered voters at least
20 thirty-five days prior to each statewide primary or general
21 election and at least fifteen days prior to all other elections.

22 (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, upon
23 request for a ballot, a ballot for early voting shall be forwarded
24 to each voter meeting the criteria of section 32-939 at least
25 forty-five days prior to any election. The election commissioner

1 or county clerk shall not forward any ballot for early voting if
2 the election to which such ballot pertains has already been held.
3 If the ballot has not been printed in sufficient time to meet
4 the requirements of this subsection, the election commissioner or
5 county clerk shall issue a special ballot at least ~~fifty-seven~~
6 sixty days prior to an election to each voter meeting the criteria
7 of section 32-939 upon the written request by such voter requesting
8 the special ballot. A complete list of the nominated candidates
9 and issues to be voted upon by a voter meeting the criteria of
10 such section shall be included with the special ballot by the
11 election commissioner or county clerk. A notice shall be sent with
12 the primary election ballot stating that the voter must request a
13 general election ballot unless such voter has requested both the
14 primary and general election ballots. If the voter has requested
15 both ballots, a notice shall be sent with the primary election
16 ballot stating that the general election ballot will be sent to the
17 same address unless otherwise notified.

18 (3) For purposes of this section, a special ballot means
19 a ballot prescribed by the Secretary of State which contains
20 the titles of all offices being contested at such election and
21 permits the voter to vote by writing in the names of the specific
22 candidates or the decision on any issue.

23 (4) The election commissioner or county clerk shall
24 publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the county an
25 application form to be used by registered voters in making an

1 application for a ballot for early voting after the ballots become
2 available. The publication of the application shall not be required
3 if the election is held by mail pursuant to sections 32-952 to
4 32-959.

5 Sec. 6. Section 32-904, Revised Statutes Cumulative
6 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

7 32-904 The election commissioner or county clerk shall
8 designate the polling places for each precinct at which the
9 registered voters of the precinct will cast their votes. Polling
10 places representing different precincts may be combined at a
11 single location when potential sites cannot be found, contracts for
12 utilizing polling sites cannot be obtained, or a potential site
13 is not accessible to handicapped persons. When combining polling
14 places at a single site for an election other than a special
15 election, the election commissioner or county clerk shall clearly
16 separate the polling places from each other and maintain separate
17 receiving and ~~counting~~ boards. When combining polling places at
18 a single site for a special election, the election commissioner
19 or county clerk may combine the polling places and receiving
20 and ~~counting~~ boards. Polling places shall not be changed between
21 the statewide primary and general elections unless the election
22 commissioner or county clerk has been authorized to make such
23 change by the Secretary of State. If changes are authorized, the
24 election commissioner or county clerk shall notify each state
25 and local candidate affected by the change. Notwithstanding any

1 other provision of the Election Act, the Secretary of State may
2 adopt and promulgate rules and regulations, with the consent of
3 the appropriate election commissioner or county clerk, for the
4 establishment of polling places which may be used for voting
5 pursuant to section 32-1041 for the twenty days preceding the day
6 of election. Such polling places shall be in addition to the office
7 of the election commissioner or county clerk and the polling places
8 otherwise established pursuant to this section.

9 Sec. 7. Section 32-906, Reissue Revised Statutes of
10 Nebraska, is amended to read:

11 32-906 (1) The election commissioner or county clerk
12 shall provide each polling place with ballot boxes, ballot box
13 locks and keys, and a sufficient number of voting booths furnished
14 with supplies and conveniences to enable each registered voter to
15 prepare his or her ballot for voting and to secretly mark his or
16 her ballot. One voting booth shall be provided for approximately
17 every one hundred registered voters in the precinct. The election
18 commissioner or county clerk may increase or decrease the number
19 of voting booths to accommodate the expected voter turnout of any
20 election other than a statewide election. ~~In precincts required to~~
21 ~~have a counting board pursuant to section 32-224 or 32-234, the~~
22 ~~county shall provide an enclosed compartment for the use of the~~
23 ~~counting board.~~

24 (2) When there is no structure within the precinct
25 suitable for use as a polling place, the election commissioner or

1 county clerk may designate a polling place outside the precinct
2 and convenient thereto which shall be provided with voting booths
3 furnished with supplies and conveniences and, when utilized, an
4 enclosed compartment for use of the counting board as are other
5 polling places.

6 (3) Standards for polling places shall include any
7 applicable standards developed under sections 81-5,147 and
8 81-5,148.

9 Sec. 8. Section 32-909, Revised Statutes Cumulative
10 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

11 32-909 Before any ballot is deposited in the ballot box,
12 the ballot box shall be publicly opened and exhibited and the
13 judges and clerks of election shall see that no ballot is in the
14 box. The ballot box shall then be locked and the key delivered to
15 one of the judges of election or, in counties having an election
16 commissioner, to the precinct inspector. If paper ballots are being
17 used that will be manually counted, a ballot box containing such
18 ballots shall not be opened again until opened by the counting
19 board. A ballot box which contains ballots that will be counted
20 using a scanner may be opened prior to the hour established by law
21 for the closing of the polls at the discretion of the election
22 commissioner or county clerk.

23 Sec. 9. Section 32-1001, Reissue Revised Statutes of
24 Nebraska, is amended to read:

25 32-1001 After the polls have closed, the precinct list of

1 registered voters and the precinct sign-in register shall be signed
2 by all members of the receiving board, the names of the registered
3 voters shall be counted, and the number shall be recorded where
4 designated on the list and the register. If a line is missed or a
5 name is voided, the receiving board shall subtract such omissions
6 or voids from the total before recording the total on the list
7 and the register. The receiving board shall certify to all matters
8 pertaining to casting of ballots and shall turn over the ballots,
9 ballot boxes, list of registered voters, and sign-in register to
10 the ~~counting board~~ election commissioner or county clerk.

11 Sec. 10. Section 32-1002, Revised Statutes Cumulative
12 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

13 32-1002 (1) As the ballots are removed from the ballot
14 box pursuant to sections ~~32-1011 to 32-1026~~, 32-1012 to 32-1018,
15 the receiving board ~~or counting board~~ shall separate the envelopes
16 containing the provisional ballots from the rest of the ballots and
17 deliver them to the election commissioner or county clerk.

18 (2) Upon receipt of a provisional ballot, the election
19 commissioner or county clerk shall verify that the certificate on
20 the front of the envelope or the form attached to the envelope is
21 in proper form and that the certification has been signed by the
22 voter.

23 (3) The election commissioner or county clerk shall also
24 (a) verify that such person has not voted anywhere else in the
25 county or been issued an ~~absentee~~ a ballot for early voting, (b)

1 investigate whether any credible evidence exists that the person
2 was properly registered to vote in the county before the deadline
3 for registration for the election, (c) investigate whether any
4 information has been received pursuant to section 32-309, 32-310,
5 or 32-324 that the person has resided, registered, or voted in
6 any other county or state since registering to vote in the county,
7 and (d) upon determining that credible evidence exists that the
8 person was properly registered to vote in the county, make the
9 appropriate changes to the voter registration register by entering
10 the information contained in the registration application completed
11 by the voter at the time of voting a provisional ballot.

12 (4) A provisional ballot cast by a voter pursuant to
13 section 32-915 shall be counted if:

14 (a) Credible evidence exists that the voter was properly
15 registered in the county before the deadline for registration for
16 the election;

17 (b) The voter has resided in the county continuously
18 since registering to vote in the county;

19 (c) The voter has not voted anywhere else in the county
20 or has not otherwise voted early using a ballot for early voting;

21 (d) The voter has completed a registration application
22 prior to voting and:

23 (i) The residence address provided on the registration
24 application completed pursuant to subdivision (1)(e) of section
25 32-915 is located within the precinct in which the person voted;

1 and

2 (ii) If the voter is voting in a primary election,
3 the party affiliation provided on the registration application
4 completed prior to voting the provisional ballot is the same party
5 affiliation that appears on the voter's voter registration record
6 based on his or her previous registration application; and

7 (e) The certification on the front of the envelope or
8 form attached to the envelope is in the proper form and signed by
9 the voter.

10 (5) A provisional ballot cast by a voter pursuant to
11 section 32-915 shall not be counted if:

12 (a) The voter was not properly registered in the county
13 before the deadline for registration for the election;

14 (b) Information has been received pursuant to section
15 32-309, 32-310, or 32-324 that the voter has resided, registered,
16 or voted in any other county or state since registering to vote in
17 the county in which he or she cast the provisional ballot;

18 (c) Credible evidence exists that the voter has voted
19 elsewhere or has otherwise voted early;

20 (d) The voter failed to complete and sign a registration
21 application pursuant to subdivision (1)(e) of section 32-915;

22 (e) The residence address provided on the registration
23 application completed pursuant to subdivision (1)(e) of section
24 32-915 is in a different county or in a different precinct than the
25 county or precinct in which the voter voted;

1 (f) If the voter is voting in a primary election, the
2 party affiliation on the registration application completed prior
3 to voting the provisional ballot is different than the party
4 affiliation that appears on the voter's voter registration record
5 based on his or her previous registration application; or

6 (g) The voter failed to complete and sign the
7 certification on the envelope or form attached to the envelope
8 pursuant to subsection (3) of section 32-915.

9 (6) Upon determining that the voter's provisional ballot
10 is eligible to be counted, the election commissioner or county
11 clerk shall remove the ballot from the envelope without exposing
12 the marks on the ballot and shall place the ballot with the ballots
13 to be counted by the county canvassing board.

14 (7) The election commissioner or county clerk shall
15 notify the system administrator of the system created pursuant to
16 section 32-202 as to whether the ballot was counted and, if not,
17 the reason the ballot was not counted.

18 (8) The verification and investigation shall be completed
19 within seven days after the election.

20 Sec. 11. Section 32-1004, Reissue Revised Statutes of
21 Nebraska, is amended to read:

22 32-1004 If a ballot has been overvoted for any office,
23 the ballot shall be rejected for that office only. No overvoted
24 ballot shall be judged for voter intent by any member of the
25 counting board or any official involved in the counting process.

1 The counting board in counties which count ballots manually shall
2 make the following notation on the rejected ballots: Rejected for
3 the office of, overvoted.

4 Sec. 12. Section 32-1010, Reissue Revised Statutes of
5 Nebraska, is amended to read:

6 32-1010 Ballots ~~may~~ shall be counted (1) or compiled at
7 a centralized location as provided in sections ~~32-1011~~ 32-1012 to
8 32-1018. The receiving board shall deliver the ballot box and other
9 election materials to the centralized location as directed by the
10 election commissioner or county clerk. ~~or (2) in the precinct by~~
11 ~~the receiving board which becomes the counting board after the~~
12 ~~polls are closed or by a counting board that is separate from the~~
13 ~~receiving board as provided in sections 32-1019 to 32-1026. Each~~
14 ~~counting board shall complete its duties and certify to all matters~~
15 ~~pertaining to the counting of votes.~~

16 Sec. 13. Section 32-1027, Revised Statutes Cumulative
17 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

18 32-1027 (1) The election commissioner or county clerk
19 shall appoint two or more registered voters to the counting board
20 for early voting. One registered voter shall be appointed from the
21 political party casting the highest number of votes for Governor
22 or for President of the United States in the county in the
23 immediately preceding general election, and one registered voter
24 shall be appointed from the political party casting the next
25 highest vote for such office. The election commissioner or county

1 clerk may appoint additional registered voters to serve on the
2 counting board and may appoint registered voters to serve in case
3 of a vacancy among any of the members of the counting board. Such
4 appointees shall be balanced between the political parties and may
5 include registered voters unaffiliated with any political party.
6 The counting board may begin carrying out its duties not earlier
7 than the ~~Thursday~~ second Monday before the election and shall meet
8 as directed by the election commissioner or county clerk.

9 (2) The counting board shall place all identification
10 envelopes in order and shall review each returned identification
11 envelope pursuant to verification procedures prescribed in
12 subsections (3) and (4) of this section.

13 (3) In its review, the counting board shall determine if:

14 (a) The voter has provided his or her name, residence
15 address, and signature on the voter identification envelope;

16 (b) The ballot has been received from the voter who
17 requested it and the residence address is the same address
18 provided on the voter's request for a ballot for early voting, by
19 comparing the information provided on the identification envelope
20 with information recorded in the record of early voters or the
21 voter's request;

22 (c) A completed and signed registration application has
23 been received from the voter by the deadline in section 32-302,
24 32-321, or 32-325 or by the close of the polls pursuant to section
25 32-945;

1 (d) An identification document has been received from the
2 voter not later than the close of the polls on election day if
3 required pursuant to section 32-318.01; and

4 (e) A completed and signed registration application and
5 oath has been received from the voter by the close of the polls on
6 election day if required pursuant to section 32-946.

7 (4) On the basis of its review, the counting board
8 shall determine whether the ballot shall be counted or rejected as
9 follows:

10 (a) A ballot received from a voter who was properly
11 registered on or prior to the deadline for registration pursuant
12 to section 32-302 or 32-321 shall be accepted for counting without
13 further review if:

14 (i) The name on the identification envelope appears to be
15 that of a registered voter to whom a ballot for early voting has
16 been issued or sent;

17 (ii) The residence address provided on the identification
18 envelope is the same residence address at which the voter is
19 registered or is in the same precinct and subdivision of a
20 precinct, if any; and

21 (iii) The identification envelope has been signed by the
22 voter;

23 (b) In the case of a ballot received from a voter who
24 was not properly registered prior to the deadline for registration
25 pursuant to section 32-302 or 32-321, the ballot shall be accepted

1 for counting if:

2 (i) A valid registration application completed and signed
3 by the voter has been received by the election commissioner or
4 county clerk prior to the close of the polls on election day;

5 (ii) The name on the identification envelope appears to
6 be that of the person who requested the ballot;

7 (iii) The residence address provided on the
8 identification envelope and on the registration application
9 is the same as the residence address as provided on the voter's
10 request for a ballot for early voting; and

11 (iv) The identification envelope has been signed by the
12 voter;

13 (c) In the case of a ballot received from a voter without
14 a residence address who requested a ballot pursuant to section
15 32-946, the ballot shall be accepted for counting if:

16 (i) The name on the identification envelope appears to be
17 that of a registered voter to whom a ballot has been sent;

18 (ii) A valid registration application completed and
19 signed by the voter, for whom the residence address is deemed
20 to be the address of the office of the election commissioner or
21 county clerk pursuant to section 32-946, has been received by the
22 election commissioner or county clerk prior to the close of the
23 polls on election day;

24 (iii) The oath required pursuant to section 32-946 has
25 been completed and signed by the voter and received by the election

1 commissioner or county clerk by the close of the polls on election
2 day; and

3 (iv) The identification envelope has been signed by the
4 voter; and

5 (d) In the case of a ballot received from a registered
6 voter required to present identification before voting pursuant to
7 section 32-318.01, the ballot shall be accepted for counting if:

8 (i) The name on the identification envelope appears to
9 be that of a registered voter to whom a ballot has been issued or
10 sent;

11 (ii) The residence address provided on the identification
12 envelope is the same address at which the voter is registered or is
13 in the same precinct and subdivision of a precinct, if any;

14 (iii) A copy of an identification document authorized in
15 section 32-318.01 has been received by the election commissioner or
16 county clerk prior to the close of the polls on election day; and

17 (iv) The identification envelope has been signed by the
18 voter.

19 (5) In opening the identification envelope or the return
20 envelope to determine if registration applications, oaths, or
21 identification documents have been enclosed by the voters from whom
22 they are required, the counting board shall make a good faith
23 effort to ensure that the ballot remains folded and that the
24 secrecy of the vote is preserved.

25 (6) The counting board may, on the ~~Thursday~~ second Monday

1 before the election, open all identification envelopes which are
2 approved, and if the signature of the election commissioner or
3 county clerk or his or her employee is on the ballot, the ballot
4 shall be unfolded, flattened for purposes of using the optical
5 scanner, and placed in a sealed container for counting ~~on election~~
6 day, as directed by the election commissioner or county clerk. At
7 the discretion of the election commissioner or county clerk, the
8 counting board may begin counting early ballots no earlier than
9 twenty-four hours prior to the opening of the polls on the day of
10 the election.

11 (7) If an identification envelope is rejected, the
12 counting board shall not open the identification envelope. The
13 counting board shall write Rejected on the identification envelope
14 and the reason for the rejection. If the ballot is rejected after
15 opening the identification envelope because of the absence of the
16 official signature on the ballot, the ballot shall be reinserted
17 in the identification envelope which shall be resealed and marked
18 Rejected, no official signature. The counting board shall place
19 the rejected identification envelopes and ballots in a container
20 labeled Rejected Ballots and seal it.

21 (8) As soon as all ballots have been placed in the sealed
22 container and rejected identification envelopes or ballots have
23 been sealed in the Rejected Ballots container, the counting board
24 shall count the ballots the same as all other ballots and an
25 unofficial count shall be reported to the election commissioner or

1 county clerk. No results shall be released prior to the closing of
2 the polls on election day.

3 Sec. 14. Section 32-1041, Revised Statutes Cumulative
4 Supplement, 2006, is amended to read:

5 32-1041 The election commissioner or county clerk may use
6 ~~paper ballots,~~ optical-scan ballots, or voting systems approved by
7 the Secretary of State to allow registered voters to cast their
8 votes at any election. ~~Paper ballots may be used in combination~~
9 ~~with other methods of casting ballots.~~ The election commissioner
10 or county clerk may use vote counting devices and voting systems
11 approved by the Secretary of State for tabulating the votes cast
12 at any election. Vote counting devices shall include electronic
13 counting devices such as optical scanners. Any new voting or
14 counting system shall be approved by the Secretary of State prior
15 to use by an election commissioner or county clerk. Notwithstanding
16 any other provision of the Election Act, the Secretary of State may
17 adopt and promulgate rules and regulations to establish different
18 procedures and locations for voting and counting votes pursuant to
19 the use of any new voting or counting system. The procedures shall
20 be designed to preserve the safety and confidentiality of each
21 vote cast and the secrecy and security of the counting process, to
22 establish security provisions for the prevention of fraud, and to
23 ensure that the election is conducted in a fair manner.

24 Sec. 15. Section 32-1049, Reissue Revised Statutes of
25 Nebraska, is amended to read:

1 32-1049 Any election commissioner or county clerk using
2 a vote counting device to count ballots in a centralized location
3 shall:

4 (1) Provide for the proper sealing of the containers and
5 the security of the ballots when transported from each polling
6 place to the centralized location and when removed from their
7 containers and delivered to the personnel who operate the vote
8 counting devices;

9 (2) Provide a process of counting which allows for the
10 ballots of each precinct to be placed in a sealed container and
11 placed in a secure location after the counting process has been
12 completed;

13 (3) Provide for a method of overseeing the ballots that
14 have been overvoted or damaged which does not involve judging voter
15 intent to assure that these ballots have not been or will not be
16 intentionally mismarked;

17 (4) Provide for a procedure for counting write-in votes
18 when such votes and names of write-in candidates are to be counted
19 and recorded;

20 (5) Provide for at least three independent tests to be
21 conducted before counting begins to verify the accuracy of the
22 counting process, which includes the computerized program installed
23 for counting various ballots by vote counting devices, by (a)
24 the election commissioner or county clerk, (b) the chief deputy
25 election commissioner or a registered voter with a different party

1 affiliation than that of the election commissioner or county clerk,
2 and (c) the person who installed the program in the vote counting
3 device or the person in charge of operating the device;

4 (6) Provide for storing and safeguarding the magnetic
5 tapes or computer chips of the vote counting devices for the
6 required period of time;

7 (7) Provide the appropriate security personnel or
8 measures necessary to safeguard the secrecy and security of the
9 counting process;

10 (8) ~~When deemed necessary by the election commissioner~~
11 ~~or county clerk, develop~~ Develop a procedure for picking up and
12 counting ballots during election day at the discretion of the
13 election commissioner or county clerk. No report or tabulation of
14 vote totals for such ballots shall be produced or generated prior
15 to one hour before the closing of the polls; and

16 (9) Submit a written plan to the Secretary of State
17 specifically outlining the procedures that will be followed on
18 election day to implement this section. The plan shall be submitted
19 no later than twenty-five days before the election and shall be
20 modified, as necessary, for each primary, general, or special
21 election.

22 Sec. 16. Original sections 32-230, 32-232, 32-235,
23 32-612, 32-906, 32-1001, 32-1004, 32-1010, and 32-1049, Reissue
24 Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and sections 32-808, 32-904,
25 32-909, 32-1002, 32-1027, and 32-1041, Revised Statutes Cumulative

1 Supplement, 2006, are repealed.

2 Sec. 17. The following sections are outright repealed:

3 Sections 32-224, 32-234, 32-1011, 32-1019, 32-1020, 32-1021,

4 32-1022, 32-1023, 32-1024, and 32-1025, Reissue Revised Statutes

5 of Nebraska, and section 32-1026, Reissue Revised Statutes of

6 Nebraska, as amended by section 3, Legislative Bill 44, One

7 Hundredth Legislature, First Session, 2007.