

**ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2020**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB1055**

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**Hearing Date:** Wednesday February 05, 2020  
**Committee On:** Government, Military and Veterans Affairs  
**Introducer:** Brewer  
**One Liner:** Change provisions for voting by mail in certain counties

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**  
**Aye:** 6 Senators Brewer, Hansen, M., Hilgers, Kolowski, La Grone, Lowe  
**Nay:**  
**Absent:**  
**Present Not Voting:** 2 Senators Blood, Hunt

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**Oral Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Tony Baker for Senator Tom Brewer  
Sheri St Clair  
Westin Miller  
Jon Cannon  
Edison McDonald

**Representing:**

Introducer  
League of Women Voters Nebraska  
Civic Nebraska  
NACO  
The ARC of Nebraska

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LB 1055 would require that small counties that conduct elections entirely by mail for one or more precincts maintain at least one in-person polling location and a secure ballot dropbox at the office of the county clerk. The bill also adds permissive authority for counties with an approved vote-by-mail plan to add additional secure dropboxes and in-person voting locations at their discretion.

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**Explanation of amendments:**

AM 2573 adds the provisions of several other bills relating to the conduct of elections and candidates for elective office.

LB 820: This bill removes language referring specifically to "home" and "work" telephone numbers in section 32-312, the section of Nebraska statute dictating the contents of the voter registration application form used in Nebraska. As amended by the committee, it would also make several changes to the procedure for recalling local elected officials. It clarifies that the fifteen days afforded to the filing clerk after the filing of the petition are business days. It changes the timeline for ordering and holding a special recall election. Currently, this must occur between fifty and eighty days of notice being received by the official to be removed. This bill would instead initiate the timeline for holding the election upon receipt of the notification by the filing clerk. The election would be held no sooner than fifty days after certification to the election commissioner or county clerk.

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LB 1086: This bill amends the Election Act. It defines the term "poll watcher." It specifies minimum individual qualifications for poll watchers. It provides for the appointment of poll watchers by political parties, nonpartisan candidates in electoral contests, organizations formed relating to ballot questions, and nonpartisan organizations interested in elections. Notice of such appointments would be due to relevant county elections officials or to the Secretary of State no later than the end of the day on the Wednesday prior to the election, however the bill provides that "a poll watcher shall not be denied entry to a polling place because a poll watcher is not on the list [...]."

The bill would require that eligible poll watchers who are residents of Nebraska be provided a credential by the local election official. Poll watchers who are "representing a state-based, national or international election monitoring organization" would be issued credentials by the Secretary of State.

Precinct inspectors would be required to maintain a sign-in sheet for poll watchers. Poll watchers would be entitled to be present for all proceedings at the polling place governed by the election act. A poll watcher or the organization appointing the poll watcher would be entitled under this bill to present protests relating to "any aspect of the conduct of the election" to the Secretary of state or local election official, who would be required to "rule on the issue" within a reasonable amount of time.

The bill would prohibit interference or assistance by poll watchers regarding any voter unless selected by the voter to provide assistance. Poll watchers would be prohibited from engaging in electioneering activities while at the polling place.

Poll watchers would be required to maintain a minimum distance of eight feet from the sign-in table, sign-in register, polling booths, ballot box, and uncast ballots. This minimum distance could be modified if eight feet is impracticable in a particular polling location.

Violation of the limitations set in Section 8 of the bill would be a class V misdemeanor.

LB 1136: This bill modifies the Nebraska Political Accountability and Disclosure Act to add local public power board members to the list of officers whose conduct is governed by the procedures set out in the Act for dealing with conflicts of interest when taking action on board agenda items. The bill would repeal outright Section 70-642.02, which prohibits board members from having an interest in any contract to which the board is party.

LB 1119: This bill would amend Section 32-405 to provide that no special elections may be held in March of even-numbered years unless in conjunction with a statewide primary or general election. Current law prohibits special elections during April, May, June, October, November, and December of even-numbered years.

LB 1120: This bill would amend Section 32-405 to provide that no special elections may be held in September of even-numbered years unless in conjunction with a statewide primary or general election. Current law prohibits special elections during April, May, June, October, November, and December of even-numbered years.

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Tom Brewer, Chairperson