

Exhibit B

Anatomy of the absentee voting process

Absentee balloting is marked by three p's contributing to a complex and expensive process: paper, people, and postage.

The voter's experience

Absentee balloting is a paper-intensive process. Absentee ballots (specific to a voter's ward and precinct), ballot instructions, and a series of envelopes must be gathered in response to each absentee ballot request. These materials must be either handed to the voter or mailed to the voter. Ballots mailed out to voters also include a postage-paid, return envelope. If a voter is not already registered to vote, the absentee voting paperwork also includes a voter registration application.

The image displays two sets of absentee ballot materials for Minnesota voters. The left set is for 'Registered Voter Absentee Ballot Materials' and the right set is for 'Non-Registered Voter Absentee Ballot Materials'. Both sets include a 'Ballot Envelope', a 'Signature Envelope', and a 'Minnesota Voter Registration Application' (A.B.). The materials are laid out to show the sequence of steps a voter would follow, from receiving the materials to sealing the envelopes and returning the ballot.

The process of casting an absentee ballot begins with the completion of a ballot application. This can be done via a paper application or, beginning in 2014, through an online application managed by the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State. The information contained in the application must be entered into the State Voter Registration System (SVRS), either manually in the case of paper applications or through the interface and sharing of data between the online application and SVRS. All information must be verified and matched to any existing SVRS record for the voter making the request.

After receipt of an absentee ballot application, an absentee ballot for a Minneapolis voter may be issued:

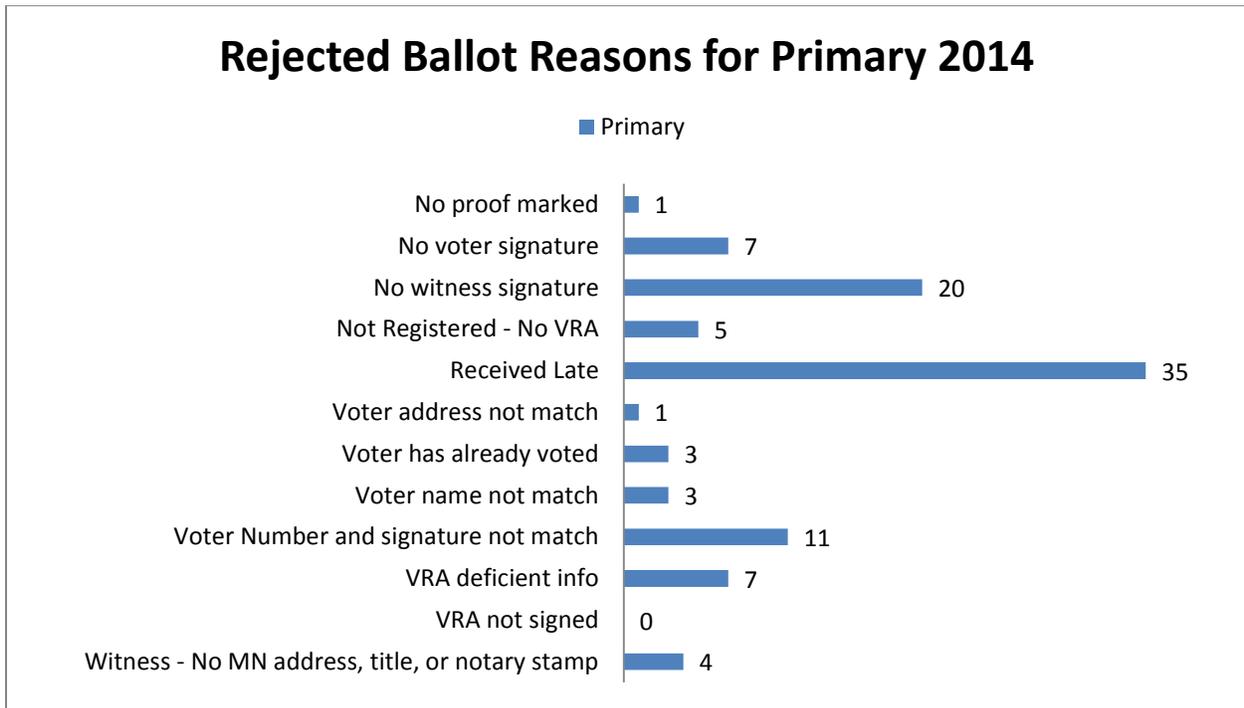
- Directly to a voter to complete in-person during the 46 days prior to the election at the Hennepin County or City of Minneapolis Elections office.
- To a voter through the mail.
- To a resident of a health care facility by two election judges.
- To an agent if during the seven days before an election the voter is a patient of a health care facility, assisted living facility, a participant in a residential program for adults, a resident of a battered women's shelter, or to a voter who would have difficulty getting to the polls because of incapacitating health reasons, in which case special procedures apply.

Processing ballots

Absentee ballots returned to the City must be processed by the Absentee Ballot Board, comprised of election judges, city staff, and seasonal staffers. The Absentee Ballot Board is charged with:

1. Verifying the accuracy and completeness of the data provided by the voter by accepting or rejecting the ballot.
2. Updating the State Voter Registration System (SVRS) to acknowledge receipt of the voted ballot.
3. Opening the series of enclosed envelopes.
4. Preparing the ballot for tabulation (unfolding, flattening, and duplicating as needed)
5. Securing voted ballots to ensure accuracy and chain of custody in the delivery of the voted ballots to the county for tabulation at Hennepin County.

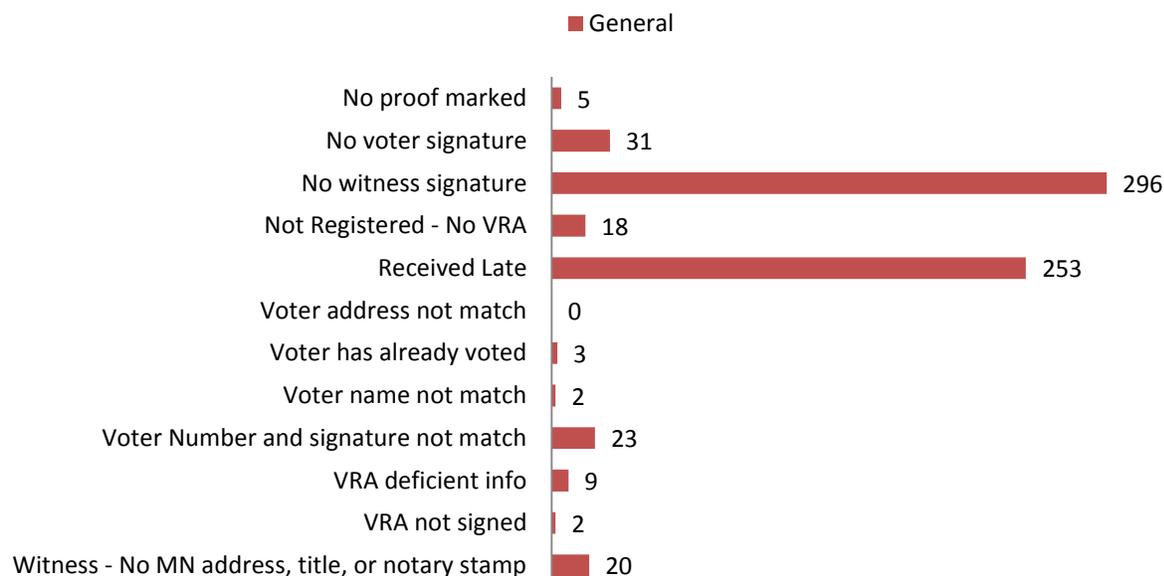
After absentee ballots are received, they are either accepted or rejected. Figures 7 and 8 break out the reasons ballots were rejected in both the primary and general election in 2014. Ballots received after 3:00 p.m. on Election Day and the days after Election Day are rejected as Received Late, one of the most common reasons for a ballot to be rejected. For those voters who submit their ballots in a timely manner, failure to have a qualified witness⁴ properly complete the signature envelope with their printed name, address, and signature is the most common reason for a ballot to be rejected. If this occurs more than five days before the election, a replacement ballot is sent back to the voter, included with the replacement ballot is an explanation of why the original was rejected, including a copy of the signature envelope highlighting the error. Within the final five days before the election, the voter is contacted by phone or email to explain both why the ballot has been rejected and the options still available of coming in-person to City Hall to vote absentee or to vote at their assigned polling place on Election Day.



Rejected ballot reasons for Primary 2014

⁴ A witness must be a registered voter in Minnesota, notary, or election official.

Rejected Ballot Reasons for General 2014



Rejected ballot reasons for General 2014

Tabulating absentee ballots

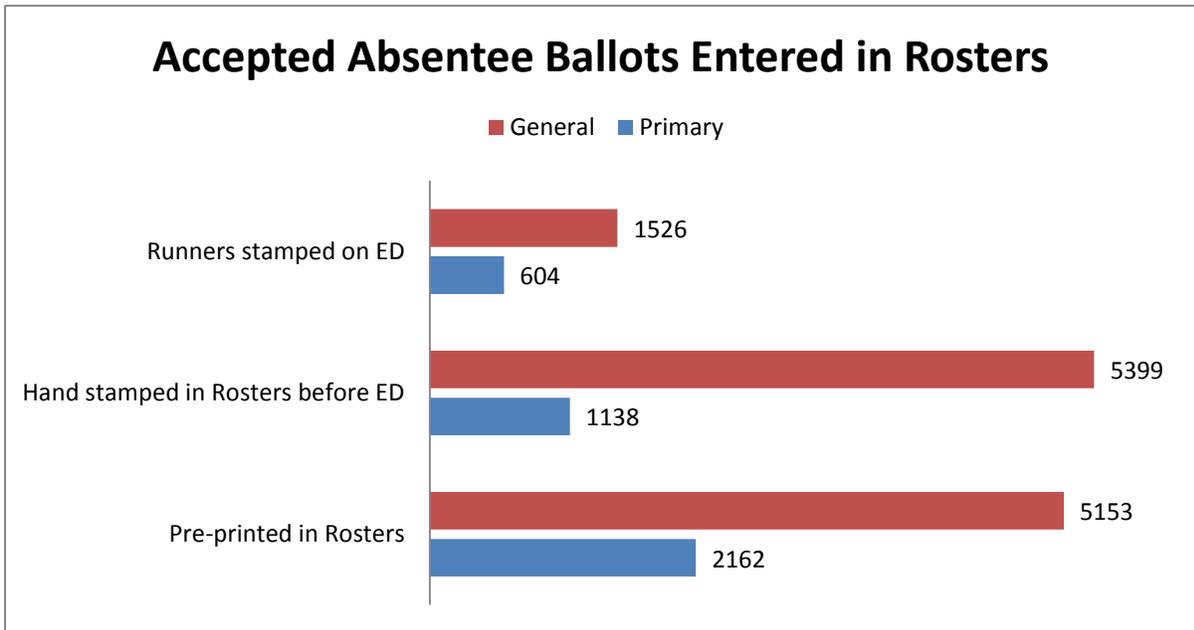
With the passage of “no-excuse” absentee balloting, the timeframe in which local jurisdictions are authorized to process absentee ballots for counting was also increased from three to seven days prior to the election. This additional time helped alleviate some bottlenecks that occurred in 2012 in processing and tabulating thousands of absentee ballots, as processing absentee ballots is labor intensive. It is a requirement by law to use teams of two election judges for each step in order to minimize errors and ensure the law is followed precisely at all times. There are three primary steps to processing that occur during this final seven day period: stamping rosters with the absentee (AB) notation, processing ballots, and tabulation. After the cutoff for printing the rosters, it is necessary to manually stamp “AB” in those printed rosters on the signature line of the voters who have cast an absentee ballot that has been accepted to eliminate the possibility of double voting on Election Day. On Election Day, a team of designated absentee runners travel to each polling place to add any final stamps for absentee votes received in the final absentee ballots processed. This work required 188 hours of staff time on Election Day.

SPECIAL FOCUS: ELECTION DAY RUNNERS

In 2014, the Elections & Voter Services Division used “runners” to update polling place rosters on Election Day. These rosters—which are produced by the Secretary of State’s office and sent to polling places the day before Election Day—must be manually updated to reflect voters who have cast an absentee ballot after the rosters have been printed and, therefore, are ineligible to cast a ballot at the polls. It is an arduous task, made more difficult by the fact that state law requires election administrators to accept absentee ballots as late as 3 p.m. on Election Day.⁵ In 2010 and 2012, phone calls were made from election headquarters to the head judge in each polling place to update and confirm these details; however, that took valuable time and created delays in serving voters in the polls.

⁵ If the voter had been found to have voted in person, their absentee ballot would be rejected.

In 2013, the Division experimented with using runners to physically go to each polling place with an updated list of absentee voters to update rosters. Feedback from election judges showed a strong preference to continue this new practice as it was less disruptive to the polls, saved time, reduced mistakes, and did not interfere with service to voters. Beginning in 2014, this practice became the standard operating procedure and a team of runners was recruited specifically to handle roster updates. For the primary, 13 teams went to 90 precincts and for the General Election, 14 teams went to 123 of the 125 precincts to stamp "AB" on the signature lines for the accepted ballots from Monday and Election Day. For the General, 1,464 ballots from the day before the election and on Election Day before 10:00 a.m. Phone calls were made to account for just the 62 ballots that were accepted between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.



Accepted absentee ballots entered in rosters

The second step in working with the accepted absentee ballots is processing and staging them for tabulation. The teams of two election judges count and open each of the two envelopes every ballot is sealed within, and then unfold and initial the ballots. This work was done on six of the seven days allowed for ballot processing, and comprised a total of 558 hours of work.

Finally, the ballots are tabulated. In Hennepin County, this is done using the County’s central ballot counter (ES&S’s DS850), capable of counting approximately 300 ballots a minute and storing vote totals for every precinct in the county. The prepared ballots are transported to Hennepin County’s central location following specific secure procedures. City ballot board staff must remain on hand to duplicate any ballots the counter is unable to read. Many ballots required such duplication, a painstaking process requiring two judges working together to carefully copy a voter’s selections on a new ballot. Judges spent a total of 166 hours over five of the seven processing days feeding ballots into the central count machine.

Once tabulation is completed, the votes cast by absentee ballot cannot be totaled until the polls close on Election Day. At that point, Hennepin County merges the absentee ballot totals for each precinct with the vote totals being reported by each polling place to report unofficial results.