

Department of Fiscal Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 69 (Delegate Workman)  
Judiciary

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**Election of Circuit Court Judges - Nonpartisan Elections**

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This bill requires that circuit court judges be elected on a nonpartisan basis. The names of those candidates for election who receive the greatest number of votes in the primary election, equal to twice the number of offices to be filled, must appear on the general election ballot. If, after the deadline for the withdrawal of candidacy and before the primary election, the number of candidates does not exceed twice the number of judgeships to be filled, the office must be removed from the primary ballot. The remaining candidates are eligible for the general election. The bill also provides that a candidate for a circuit court judgeship may not be nominated by petition.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Potential minimal increase in county expenditures as discussed below. No effect on revenues.

**Small Business Effect:** None. The bill would not directly affect small businesses.

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**Fiscal Analysis**

**Local Expenditures:** County expenditures could increase depending upon the current ballot setup in the jurisdictions. A nonpartisan election generally requires alternative ballots. Currently, there are 12 counties that elect board of education members. These counties include Allegany, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Garrett, Howard, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's, Somerset, and Washington. Since these counties already conduct nonpartisan elections, it is likely that the local elections boards could modify the existing ballot with minimal costs. However, in the remaining 12 jurisdictions, the costs could be

greater depending upon the number of additional ballots that the circuit court elections would require to be printed by the local boards. Although the number of such ballots is unknown at this time, the increase in printing costs should not be significant.

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**Information Source(s):** State Administrative Board of Election Laws; Baltimore City; Calvert, Howard, and Prince George's counties; Department of Fiscal Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 3, 1997

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