

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2005 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1381
Ways and Means

(Delegate Griffith, *et al.*)

Election Law - Task Force to Study Early Voting

This bill establishes a task force to (1) collect information on early voting practices in other jurisdictions; (2) analyze the potential impact of early voting on Maryland's current voting practices; (3) assess any practical, logistical, or financial implications or impediments to an early voting system; and (4) determine the feasibility of implementing a pilot program for early voting on or before the 2006 primary and general elections. The State Board of Elections (SBE) must provide staff support for the task force. A report with findings and recommendations is due to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2005.

The bill is effective July 1, 2005 and terminates June 30, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Background: The Election Reform Project currently reports that 35 states have some type of early voting system. The duration of early voting varies from state to state, but 10 to 14 days is the average period in which voters may cast their ballots. Satellite locations

for both no-excuse absentee and early voting have included local grocery stores (Colorado), courthouses (West Virginia), local libraries (North Carolina), and shopping malls (California). However, state and local election offices are most common.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

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