

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 534 (Senator Shank, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

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Washington County - Board of Elections - Membership and Compensation

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This bill alters the membership of the Washington County Board of Elections to consist of five regular members instead of three regular members and two substitute members. Three of the regular members must be of the majority party and two must be of the principal minority party. If a vacancy occurs on the board, the Governor must appoint an eligible person from the same political party as the predecessor member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term and until a successor is appointed and qualifies. The bill also eliminates minimum salary amounts specified in statute for regular members, allowing for the members to instead be compensated at an amount set by the county commissioners, and removes the salaries of the board of elections from a list of salaries the Washington County Salary Study Commission must study.

The bill takes effect June 6, 2011.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Washington County expenditures increase minimally in FY 2011 and by up to \$7,200 annually beginning in FY 2012 due to increased costs of compensation of board members, based on current compensation. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** Most counties, including Washington County, have a local board of elections made up of three regular members and two substitute members. Two regular members and one substitute member must be of the majority party and one regular member and one substitute member must be of the principal minority party. The board of elections in Montgomery County consists of five regular members and two substitute members, and the board in Prince George's County consists of five regular members and three substitute members. Effective June 6, 2011, the boards of elections in Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties will consist of just five regular members.

Members are generally nominated by the majority and principal minority party county central committees and appointed by the Governor, subject to legislative confirmation. If a member of a local board dies, resigns, is removed, or becomes ineligible, the substitute member belonging to the same political party becomes a regular member of the local board and a new substitute member is appointed. The term of a member is four years and begins on the first Monday in June of each year following a gubernatorial election. Each local board must meet to elect one of its regular members president within 20 days after the beginning of the term.

Each regular member of a local board receives the salary and reimbursement of expenses provided in the county budget, but minimum amounts are set in State law for the members in each county. In Washington County, the annual compensation for regular members may not be less than \$5,000 for the president and \$4,500 for other regular members. Statute specifies that a substitute member of a local board of elections must be compensated for each day of service as provided in the county budget and, in Washington County, a substitute member is paid \$75 for each meeting that the substitute member attends.

The Washington County Salary Study Commission studies the salaries of specified county officials, including the Washington County Board of Supervisors of Elections, and issues a report every four years containing recommendations to the county commissioners for review and consideration. The county commissioners may accept, reduce, or reject but may not increase the recommendations of the salary study commission.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Washington County expenditures increase minimally in fiscal 2011 (due to the bill's June 6, 2011 effective date) and by up to \$7,200 each year, beginning in fiscal 2012, accounting for increased compensation paid to the two additional regular members in comparison to the compensation of the current substitute members. Currently, in Washington County the salary of the regular members is \$4,500 and

substitute members are paid \$75 per monthly meeting (\$900 per year for each substitute member) and are paid \$15 an hour for other work during election years.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 954 (Washington County Delegation) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** Washington County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 17, 2011  
sdk/hlb Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 22, 2011

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