

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2011 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 6
Ways and Means

(Delegate V. Turner)

Elections - Political Outdoor Signs - Removal and Destruction

This bill reduces the number of days after an election within which specified political signs along State highways are required under State statute to be removed, from 15 days to 5 days. The bill also authorizes local governments to remove and destroy a sign not removed in time and seek reimbursement for the cost of removing and destroying the sign from the responsible candidate or political committee chair.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not directly affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not materially affected. The bill authorizes local governments to remove signs and to seek reimbursement for the cost of the removal from the responsible candidate or political committee chair.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill specifies that a political outdoor sign erected or maintained outside the limits of a municipal corporation and within 500 feet of a State highway must be removed within 5 days (instead of 15 days) after the primary election, if the candidate is not a candidate in the general election, and within 5 days (instead of 15 days) after the general election. If a sign is not removed in time, the government of the county or municipality in which the sign is located may remove and destroy the sign and charge the candidate or chair of the political committee that erected the sign for the cost of removing and destroying the sign.

Current Law: Under the Transportation Article, with certain exceptions, a person may not erect or maintain any outdoor sign outside the limits of any municipal corporation and within 500 feet of a State highway unless the person has a permit issued by the State Highway Administration for the sign. Among the exceptions, a permit is not required for an outdoor sign that advertises a candidate or the support or defeat of any proposition. Such a sign, however, is subject to certain restrictions, including that the sign must, in the absence of more restrictive local time limitations, not be erected more than 45 days prior to the election and be removed within 15 days after the primary election if the candidate is not a candidate in the general election and within 15 days after the general election.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation (State Highway Administration); State Board of Elections; Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, and St. Mary's counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 3, 2011
mlm/hlb

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510