

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 236 (Delegate McComas, *et al.*)
Rules and Executive Nominations

Election Law - Districting Plan Questions - Inclusion of Map

This bill requires, when a ballot question relates to the enactment of a legislative or congressional districting plan that was petitioned to referendum, that the question contain a map of the State that shows the boundary lines of the districts included in the plan.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to affect State finances in the near term; however, ballot printing costs may increase in future years to include a districting map on ballots for any districting plan petitioned to referendum.

Local Effect: Local government finances are not affected in the near term; however, ballot printing and mailing costs may increase in future years to include a districting map on ballots for any districting plan petitioned to referendum.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each ballot question must appear on the ballot containing (1) a question number or letter; (2) a brief designation of the type or source of the question; (3) a brief descriptive title in boldface type; (4) a condensed statement of the purpose of the question; and (5) the voting choices the voter has.

Background: Redistricting occurs every 10 years following the U.S. decennial census. Maryland's most recent congressional districting plan was enacted under Chapter 1 of the 2011 special session (SB 1) and the most recent legislative districting plan was adopted under Joint Resolutions 1 and 2 of 2012 (SJ 1/HJ 1). Chapter 1 of the 2011 special session was petitioned to referendum and approved by the voters at the 2012 general election.

State Fiscal Effect: The bill is not expected to affect State finances in the near term, assuming the earliest a districting plan would be petitioned to referendum and placed on the ballot would be in 2022. However, if a plan is petitioned to referendum and placed on the ballot, general fund expenditures may increase to the extent an additional ballot card is needed to include a legible districting map on a ballot.

The content and length of ballots varies across the State, depending on the offices, candidates, and questions being voted on. Depending on the space available on a given ballot, some ballots may require an additional ballot card to include a legible districting map, while others may not. *For illustrative purposes*, assuming the State transitions to an optical scan voting system, as is currently planned for the 2016 elections, if 1 million printed ballots (there are currently 3.8 million registered voters in the State) require an additional ballot card in order to include a districting map, costs for the ballots increase by approximately \$350,000, assuming a price of \$.35 per ballot card (which does not account for inflation). The State Board of Elections (SBE) would incur half of that cost, or \$175,000. SBE shares ballot printing costs with the local boards of elections pursuant to Chapter 564 of 2001 (HB 1457).

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill is not expected to affect local government finances in the near term. However, if a districting plan is petitioned to referendum and placed on the ballot in 2022, local boards of elections would incur half of any increased cost for additional ballot cards as described above. Adding a districting map may also increase local boards of elections' costs of printing specimen ballots and postage costs for specimen and absentee ballots.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Calvert, Caroline, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Baltimore City; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 7, 2013
ncs/hlb

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