

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1044  
Ways and Means

(Prince George's County Delegation)

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**Prince George's County - Election Law - Polling Places - Accommodations for  
Disabled Voters  
PG 410-14**

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This bill requires, in Prince George's County, that if a disabled voter is in a waiting line to vote, an election judge, to the extent practicable, must (1) designate another voter in the waiting line to serve as a placeholder and allow the disabled voter to sit until the placeholder reaches the check-in judge or (2) move the disabled voter to the front of the waiting line.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** Prince George's County finances are not materially affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Election judges have various duties in statute and State Board of Elections (SBE) regulations relating to administering the voting process and assisting voters. These duties include carrying out any tasks assigned by the local board of elections including those in an election judge instruction manual. Election judges are required in statute and SBE regulations to assist voters with a physical disability and those who are unable to read or write the English language.

**Background:** Wait times for voters in general raised concern following the 2012 elections, both in Maryland and nationally. Chapters 157 and 158 of 2013 required SBE to study the issue and determine what adjustments could be implemented to reduce maximum wait times. SBE contracted with the University of Baltimore's Schaefer Center for Public Policy to conduct the study, the findings and recommendations of which are included in the Schaefer Center's report, *Voting and the Administration of Elections in Maryland* (January 15, 2014) ([http://www.elections.state.md.us/press\\_room/reports.html](http://www.elections.state.md.us/press_room/reports.html)). For more information on the issue of voting wait times in general, also see the Department of Legislative Services 2014 Issue Papers, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/Pubs/legislegal/2014rs-Issue-Papers.pdf>, pgs. 241-243 ("Improving the Voter Experience").

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 18, 2014  
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