

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1008 (Delegate Mautz, *et al.*)
Ways and Means

Recreational Hunting and Fishing License Applications - Voter Registration

This bill requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to jointly develop and implement procedures for persons who apply for the issuance or renewal of a recreational hunting or fishing license online to be offered the opportunity to register to vote through a link to Maryland's Online Voter Registration System. However, DNR may not be deemed a voter registration agency.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's requirement can be handled with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual may apply to become a registered voter through a number of means including (1) visiting an election board office; (2) by mail; (3) when applying for services at a voter registration agency (specified public and nongovernmental agencies designated by SBE, including agencies providing public assistance and services for individuals with disabilities, public higher education institutions, and military recruiting offices); (4) when applying to the Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) for issuance, renewal, or modification of a driver's license or identification card; or (5) through SBE's online voter registration system.

In general, voter registration agencies are required to provide materials offering individuals an opportunity to register to vote with each application for service or assistance the agencies render and with each recertification, renewal, or change of address form relating to such service or assistance. Public higher education institutions are required to provide an individual with an opportunity to request a voter registration application when an individual enrolls, registers, or pays for course work. An applicant may mail the voter registration application to the appropriate State election official or return it to the voter registration agency for transmittal to the appropriate election official. Within five days of accepting a voter registration application, a voter registration agency must forward the application to the appropriate State election official.

Similar requirements of voter registration agencies exist in federal law under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

Background: Until recently, voter registration in Maryland was accomplished only through paper applications, but automated voter registration at MVA and online voter registration through SBE's website were both implemented in 2012. SBE reports that over 58,000 new registrations have been submitted through the online voter registration system since its implementation and over 159,000 existing registrations have been updated through the system. Recreational hunting and fishing licenses can be purchased online through DNR's COMPASS portal.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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