

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 411 (Senator West, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Polling Places at Continuing Care Retirement Communities

This bill requires that a separate precinct be established in a continuing care retirement community if the continuing care retirement community requests that a polling place be established on the community premises.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$2,500 in FY 2020 and by approximately \$1,500 in future years for each additional polling place established. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase by approximately \$8,000 in FY 2020 and by approximately \$3,500 in future years for each additional polling place established. Revenues are not affected. **The bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires a local board of elections to establish a separate precinct in a continuing care retirement community to specifically serve at least the residents of the retirement community if the continuing care retirement community requests that a polling place be established on the community premises.

If a polling place is established at a continuing care retirement community, the continuing care retirement community must (1) provide without charge to the local board of elections

a facility for use as a polling place that meets all applicable requirements under State election law and as established by the State Board of Elections and (2) provide assistance to the local board of elections in recruiting election judges to staff the polling place.

“Continuing care retirement community” means a facility in which a provider who holds a certificate of registration from the Maryland Department of Aging provides care to at least 200 individuals who are at least 60 years of age and not related by blood or marriage to the provider.

Current Law: As it deems expedient for the convenience of voters, a local board of elections may (1) create and alter the boundaries for precincts in the county; (2) designate the location for polling places in any election district, ward, or precinct in the county; and (3) combine or abolish precincts.

A local board must establish a separate precinct on campus, or within one-half mile of the campus, to specifically serve a public or private institution of higher education if the local board determines that at least 500 students, faculty, and staff who attend or work at the institution are registered voters in the precinct in which the institution is located. A local board is not required to establish a separate precinct if there is already an established precinct within one-half mile of the public or private institution of higher education’s campus that serves the voters who attend or work at the institution.

Background: The Maryland Department of Aging indicates that there are 38 operating or approved continuing care retirement communities in Maryland. The communities, both operating and under construction contain over 16,000 continuing care units, of which 12,000 are independent living, over 2,000 are assisted living, and over 2,000 are nursing care.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase to the extent additional polling places are established at continuing care retirement communities pursuant to the bill. The State Board of Elections (SBE) shares voting system costs with the local boards of elections pursuant to Chapter 564 of 2001. SBE costs increase by approximately \$2,500 per additional polling place in fiscal 2020 and by approximately \$1,500 per additional polling place in future years, reflecting the State’s share of voting equipment and ballot costs for the polling place.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local government expenditures increase to the extent additional polling places are established at continuing care retirement communities pursuant to the bill. Local board of elections costs increase by approximately \$8,000 per additional polling place in fiscal 2020 and by approximately \$3,500 per additional polling place in future years, reflecting the local boards of elections’ share of voting equipment and ballot costs, plus election judge, pollbook, and supplies costs.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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