Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 648   (Senator Lam)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - County Central Committees - Democratic Party Requirements

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This bill replaces county-specific provisions governing the composition of county Democratic Party central committees in certain counties with generally applicable provisions requiring that county Democratic Party central committee members be elected in accordance with party rules, Democratic State Central Committee bylaws, and county central committee bylaws and pursuant to specified notification given by the Democratic State Central Committee to the State Board of Elections (SBE) of the composition of each of the county central committees.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local government finances, provided that county central committee members are elected under the bill based on otherwise-existing legislative or local districts (similar to those used in the existing county-specific provisions defining the numbers and districts of county central committee members).

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill repeals existing local provisions governing the composition of county Democratic Party central committees and instead requires that, in each county, the members of the county Democratic Party central committee be elected in accordance with

(1) the party rules of the Democratic Party; (2) the bylaws of the Democratic State Central Committee; and (3) the bylaws of each county central committee.

The bill requires that the method of election of members of each county Democratic Party central committee promote geographic balance to the extent practicable.

Not later than one year before the deadline for filing a certificate of candidacy, the Democratic State Central Committee must notify SBE of (1) the number of elected members for each county Democratic Party central committee and (2) the composition of the districts of the elected members of each county Democratic Party central committee. A change to the method of election of county Democratic Party central committee members may not occur during an election cycle if the Democratic State Central Committee has made that notification.

A change affecting the method of election of county Democratic Party central committee members may take effect only after (1) ample advance written notice of the change is provided to the county Democratic Party central committee members; (2) a change has been made in the bylaws of the county Democratic Party central committee; and (3) the change is approved by the chair of the Democratic State Central Committee.

Current Law: Each political party must have a State central committee that is the governing body of the political party and may be composed of the members of the central committees of the counties during their terms in office. A principal political party must elect the members of a county central committee at a primary election. Except as otherwise provided under county-specific provisions for certain counties, the central committee for a county must consist of the number of members determined by the party's constitution. County-specific provisions for the composition of county Democratic Party central committees are established in statute for Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Montgomery, Prince George's, and Worcester counties.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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