

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 Third Reader

House Bill 206
 Ways and Means

(Delegate Washington)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law – Early Voting Centers – Hours of Operation

This bill increases the hours during which early voting centers are open for a gubernatorial primary or general election and a presidential primary election, so that early voting centers are open during those elections from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. instead of from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. This makes the early voting center hours for those elections equivalent to the current early voting center hours for a presidential general election.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$10,000 in FY 2022 through FY 2024 and in future fiscal years containing affected elections. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	10,000
Net Effect	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	(\$10,000)	\$0	(\$10,000)

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase in FY 2022 through 2024 and future fiscal years containing affected elections. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Early voting centers are open, in a presidential general election, during the hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. each early voting day. In all other elections, early voting centers are open during the hours between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. each early voting day.

State and Local Fiscal Effect: Increasing the number of hours early voting centers are open each early voting day in a gubernatorial primary or general election and a presidential primary election is expected to increase the State and local boards of elections' costs.

Both the State and local boards of elections' costs increase for additional compensation of voting system support personnel under the State Board of Elections' (SBE) staffing contract, which is a voting system cost shared by the State and local boards of elections. These support personnel are used in many, but not all, early voting centers (some counties separately hire their own voting system support personnel). General fund expenditures and local government expenditures each increase by approximately \$10,000 in fiscal 2022 through 2024 and future fiscal years in which a gubernatorial primary or general election or a presidential primary election occurs, for the additional voting system support personnel compensation under SBE's staffing contract.

Local boards of elections may also incur additional costs, primarily associated with (1) additional non-election judge personnel, that support early voting, working additional hours in the mornings of early voting days (including voting system support personnel that are hired outside of the SBE staffing contract) and (2) an expectation in some counties that the additional hours election judges will have to work will make recruitment or retention of election judges more difficult.

Some counties may incur relatively minimal or no additional costs, while others' costs will be more significant. Of a small number of counties contacted about the impact, Washington County does not expect costs to increase and Worcester County indicates that costs will increase by \$4,400 to increase compensation for early voting election judges in the affected fiscal years. Baltimore City indicates that it also would increase election judge compensation, increasing costs by \$29,000 in affected fiscal years. Montgomery County, the State's largest jurisdiction, which operates 11 early voting centers, expects to incur more significant costs in affected fiscal years – \$33,000 in overtime for elections and facilities staff and potentially up to \$67,000 to recruit, train, and pay additional part-time election judges to mitigate the impact of the additional hours added to early voting days.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1094 of 2020 passed the House with amendments and was referred to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: SB 596 (Senator Washington) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Baltimore City; Montgomery, Washington, and Worcester counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 18, 2021
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