

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 848

(Senator Gallion)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Government, Labor, and Elections

Municipal Elections - Reporting of Information to the State Board of Elections -
Requirements

This bill requires a municipality to submit specified information regarding its municipal elections to the State Board of Elections (SBE), in advance of each election, to be published on the SBE website, including information on (1) the qualifications to be a candidate for each office that will be on the ballot in an election and (2) once the candidate filing deadline has passed, a list of the qualified candidates for each office on the ballot and how and where voters can vote in the election. A municipality that conducts elections using ranked-choice voting must also submit its regulations for the tabulation of ranked-choice ballots to SBE to be published on the SBE website. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill can be implemented with existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Information Submitted Before the Candidate Filing Deadline

The bill requires a municipality to submit to SBE, at least three months before the candidate filing deadline for a regular municipal election, the qualifications to be a candidate for each office on the municipal ballot.

For a special municipal election, the municipality must report to SBE, within 15 business days after the special municipal election is scheduled, (1) the date of the special election; (2) each office on the special election ballot; and (3) the qualifications to be a candidate for each office on the ballot.

SBE must publish the information on its website immediately after the information is submitted by a municipality.

Information Submitted After the Candidate Filing Deadline

The bill also requires a municipality to submit to SBE, within 10 business days after the candidate filing deadline for a municipal election, including a special election, (1) a list of each qualified candidate for each office on the ballot and, if the election is a partisan election, the party affiliation of each candidate, and (2) information on how to vote and where to vote in the municipal election. SBE must publish the information immediately on its website.

Regulations for the Tabulation of Ranked-choice Ballots

A municipality that conducts its elections using ranked-choice voting must submit its regulations for the tabulation of ranked-choice ballots to SBE, and SBE must publish the regulations on its website. “Ranked-choice voting” means a method of casting and tabulating votes in which voters rank candidates in order of preference and votes are tabulated in a manner than reflects voter preference.

Current Law:

State Law Addressing Municipal Elections – In General

State election law governs the administration of federal, State, county, and Baltimore City elections held during statewide elections every two years, and special elections, but generally does not govern municipal elections other than those in Baltimore City (which is considered a “county” for purposes of State law). Municipal elections are primarily governed by each municipality’s law and occur at various times throughout the year and in odd- and even-numbered years.

While State law governing elections generally does not apply to municipal elections, there are certain provisions of State law that address municipal elections, including those that (1) allow a municipality to use the information in the statewide voter registration database to administer voter registration for its elections; (2) allow a municipality to request that SBE include the offices and questions to be voted on in a municipal election on the statewide ballot (within the municipality) during a statewide election; (3) require

municipalities to allow no-excuse absentee voting (mail-in voting) in municipal elections; and (4) require municipalities to submit their election results to SBE to publish on the SBE website.

Publication of Municipal Election Results

A municipality must, within 30 days after the results of a municipal election are certified, submit to SBE an electronic copy of the election results for each office or question voted on at the election, including:

- vote totals for each office or question, reported separately by each of the following voting methods, if applicable: (1) in-person early voting; (2) mail-in voting or vote-by-mail; (3) provisional voting; and (4) in-person election day voting; and
- the party affiliation of each candidate if the municipality conducts partisan elections.

Immediately after a municipality submits its election results, SBE must publish the election results on the SBE website. The election results published by SBE must be organized by election year and the name of the municipality.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 1448 (Delegate Tomlinson) - Government, Labor, and Elections.

Information Source(s): Maryland Municipal League; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

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Analysis by: Arnold H. Adja

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