

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 417 (Senator Blount, et al.)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

Election Laws - Lever Voting Machines - Prohibition

This bill prohibits the use of lever voting machines after December 31, 1997. The bill requires SABEL to provide by regulation diagrams, models, or directions for the use of voting systems. In addition, SABEL must adopt regulations for the handling and delivery of polling place materials generated from voting systems.

The bill is effective January 1, 1998.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. SABEL could provide direction for the use of electronic voting systems with existing resources.

Local Effect: Expenditures in six counties and Baltimore City could increase by an indeterminate significant amount as discussed below. Revenues could increase by an indeterminate amount.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Effect: Currently, there are seven jurisdictions in the State that use lever voting machines. These jurisdictions are Baltimore City and Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Dorchester, Prince George's, and Somerset counties. Under the bill, these jurisdictions would have to lease or purchase electronic voting systems. Accordingly, county expenditures would increase by an indeterminate amount depending upon the type of voting system, method of purchase (buy or lease), number of voting systems, and the type of service contract. When a county obtains a new voting system, it could sell the lever machines in a secondary market. At this time, the revenue generated from a sell-off cannot be reliably estimated.

Business Records Corporation (BRC) provides optical scan voting systems, including

training and maintenance services, to 15 counties. **Exhibit 1** shows the estimated costs for the seven jurisdictions that would be required to change to electronic voting systems. These costs are based on a seven-year lease arrangement.

Information Source(s): State Administrative Board of Election Laws, Business Records Corporation, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 9, 1996

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