

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 638 (Senator Ruben, *et al.*)
Economic and Environmental Affairs

Charter Counties - Proposed Charter Amendments - Number of Petition Signatures

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize Baltimore City and the charter counties to modify, by charter amendment, the number of petition signatures required to propose a charter amendment to any number not exceeding 20% of the registered voters of the city or county, but not less than 10,000 signatures. The charter counties are: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Talbot, and Wicomico.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal, as discussed below.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None. The bill would not directly affect small businesses.

Fiscal Analysis

State Expenditures: The Maryland Constitution requires that proposed amendments to the Constitution be publicized in at least two newspapers in each county, if available, and in at least three newspapers in Baltimore City once a week for four weeks immediately preceding a general election. The costs associated with these requirements are borne by the State. It is anticipated that the budget of the State Administrative Board of Election Laws for fiscal 1999 will contain funding for publishing constitutional amendments for the 1998 general election.

Local Expenditures: If a charter county or Baltimore City reduces the number of petition signatures required to propose a charter amendment, it could result in more proposals being

placed on election ballots. However, the additional costs would be minimal.

If approved by the General Assembly, this constitutional amendment will be submitted to the voters at the 1998 general election. It should not require additional costs for the county election boards to administer the election.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Anne Arundel, Prince George's, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 1997

ncs

Analysis by: Thomas Himler

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710