

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 120 (Delegates Arnick and Gettv)
(Commission to Revise the Election Code)

Commerce and Government Matters

Voter Registration - Last Four Digits of Social Security Number

This bill requires applicants for voter registration to provide the last four digits of their Social Security number on the application in order to qualify to vote. In addition, the State Board of Elections is required to ensure that voter registration applications collect this information and establish guidelines for local boards to obtain the last four digits of Social Security numbers for each voter currently registered. The State board is also required to establish guidelines for local boards to qualify applicants who do not possess a Social Security number.

This bill is effective January 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. Any costs associated with altering voter registration forms could be handled with existing resources of the State Board of Elections. State agencies which collect voter registration applications would not be impacted by the bill's requirement.

Local Effect: Potential minimal effect on expenditures. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Effect: Any effect on local boards of elections' expenditures depends on the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Elections for the collection of Social Security numbers of those voters already registered. Obtaining the Social Security numbers from registered voters could be handled with existing resources if the information is collected at

the polling place. On the other hand, if local boards are required to solicit this information by mail or other means, additional expenditures may be required. For example, Allegany County reports that it would cost about \$23,000 for an extensive mailing to collect Social Security numbers from voters already registered. Baltimore City advises that it could obtain the last four digits of the Social Security number of each voter over a two-year period via: (1) voter input at the polling places; and (2) a mail solicitation at the same time as voter registration confirmation letters, which could be accomplished with existing resources. As a point of reference, Prince George's County, which already collects Social Security numbers on voter registration applications, estimates that 20% of their registered voters have not provided the information.

Information Source(s): State Administrative Board of Election Laws, Prince George's County, Department of Transportation (Motor Vehicle Administration), Allegany County, Baltimore City, Department of Legislative Services

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