

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 850 (Delegate Gettv. *et al.*)

Commerce and Government Matters

Election Law - Identification of Voters

This bill changes the requirements regarding the identification of voters at the polling places. Under the bill, a registered voter must present to an election judge a driver's license, an identification card issued by the Motor Vehicle Administration, a voter identification card, or any other form of identification issued by a governmental entity that contains the voter's name, address, and date of birth. If a voter does not have the required form of identification, an election judge must ask the voter to state his or her current address and day and month of birth. Under current law, a voter's identity is verified by requesting the voter to state the voter's month and day of birth. These provisions are effective for elections conducted after January 1, 1999.

The bill also requires the State Board of Elections, in cooperation with the local boards, to conduct voter education concerning these future requirements during the 1998 primary and general elections. This provision is effective July 1, 1998.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Potential significant effect on expenditures. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None. Local election boards could perform the new identification procedures with existing resources. Accordingly, county finances would not be directly affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: State expenditures could increase, depending on the type and scope of voter education provided by the State Board of Elections. The board advises that providing posters at polling places and television public service announcements would cost approximately \$125,716. This estimate includes \$416 for printing costs for the posters, \$1,500 for production charges, and \$123,800 for television air time on one station for four weeks. The board also advises that it could mail postcards to all registered voters informing them of the identification requirements at a cost of \$35,364.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections, Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Worcester County, Washington County

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 9, 1998

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Analysis by: Thomas Hickey

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710