

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE  
Revised

Senate Bill 123 (Senators Collins and Craig)  
(Commission to Revise the Election Code)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

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**Election Law - Political Parties and Nomination of Candidates**

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This bill provides that the required number of signatures necessary to form a new political party is based upon the number of eligible voters in the State as of the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month in which the petition is submitted.

The bill also authorizes new political parties to nominate candidates by petition if at least 1% of the State's registered voters are affiliated with the party by January 1<sup>st</sup> in the year of the election.

In addition, the bill provides that after qualifying as a new political party, this status continues until December 31<sup>st</sup> in the year of the second statewide general election following the party's qualification. For later years, party status is retained through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the next general election if: (1) the party nominates a candidate for the highest office in a statewide general election and that candidate receives at least 1% of the total vote for that office; or (2) at least 1% of the State's registered voters are affiliated with the party by December 31<sup>st</sup>. The bill also requires candidates seeking nomination by petition to submit signatures of no less than 1% of the total number of registered voters who are eligible to vote for the office, with a minimum of 250 registered voters who are eligible to vote for the office sought by the petition.

This bill is effective January 1, 1999.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. Although the bill could increase the number of petitions for new political parties and nominations of new political party candidates, any increase in workload could be handled with existing resources of the State Administrative Board of Election Laws.

**Local Effect:** None. The requirements of this bill would be handled by the State Administrative Board of Election Laws. Any increase in ballot publishing costs could be handled with the existing resources of local election boards.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Information Source(s):** State Administrative Board of Election Laws, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 2, 1998  
Inc Revised - Senate Third Reader - March 23, 1998  
Revised - Enrolled Bill - May 5, 1998

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