

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 536 (Delegate Weir)
Commerce and Government Matters

Legislative Districting - Districts and Subdistricts

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment to require that, unless otherwise provided by law and to the extent practicable, each legislative district must be contained wholly within a county. If a legislative district is configured so that a majority of its population resides in one county and the remaining portion in another county, the legislative district must be subdivided into delegate districts so that the lesser population is contained within a single-member delegate district. A single-member delegate district may contain population from both counties.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal, as discussed below.

Local Effect: Minimal, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: Currently, there are 47 legislative districts in Maryland. Of these districts, three are subdivided into three single-member delegate districts and 10 are divided into two-member and single-member delegate districts. The remaining 34 districts have three-member districts.

State Expenditures: Any costs associated with developing a redistricting plan would be minimal, and could be absorbed within the existing resources of the State Administrative Board of Election Laws (SABEL).

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. The fiscal 1999 budget of SABEL contains funding for publishing constitutional amendments for the 1998 general election.

Local Expenditures: Local elections boards could experience an increase in costs due to the redistricting plan. The impact would depend upon the scope of the redistricting plan, and its impact on election precincts and ballot styles. Although the scope of such a plan cannot be determined beforehand, any expenditure increase 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): State Administrative Board of Election Laws, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 2, 1998

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