

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 127 (The Speaker. *et al.*)
(Commission to Revise the Election Code)

Commerce and Government Matters

Election Code - General Revision

This bill revises the Election Code by repealing obsolete provisions, improving the organization of the code, clarifying existing provisions, and making minor substantive changes.

This bill is effective January 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in general fund expenditures due to the hiring of a contractual employee in FY 1999. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: None. This bill would have no effect on local boards of election.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

State Effect: Under the bill, the State Board of Elections is required to adopt numerous regulations, procedures, guidelines, and forms. The regulations required must be submitted to the Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR) by August 1998 in order for the regulations to have a simultaneous effective date with the legislation. The State Board of Elections reports that an additional temporary contractual attorney is needed to meet this deadline; the Department of Legislative Services concurs. The State Board of Elections estimates that an additional contractual full-time staff person would be required to work for approximately six months. The Department of Legislative Services estimates the employee would be needed to write regulations through August 1998,

which would result in a three-month contract. The cost for hiring a contractual full-time attorney for three months is estimated at \$9,351. Any revisions which need to be made to the regulations after August 1998 could be handled with existing resources.

The bill requires that the State Board of Elections maximize the use of technology in election administration, including the development of a plan for a comprehensive computerized elections management system. However, this is not expected to increase State expenditures because the State Board of Elections is already implementing an Information Technology Master Plan, which includes an integrated statewide voter registration system. A feasibility study conducted for the State Board of Elections estimated the cost of this registration system to be between \$2.4 million and \$2.9 million depending on the type of system implemented. Additional staff could also be required to operate and maintain the computerized system. The State Board of Elections' fiscal 1999 budget allowance provides \$164,849 for information technology hardware and software and \$164,849 as a fiscal 1998 deficiency for the same purpose.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections, Prince George's County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 30, 1998
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