

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 537 (Delegate Weir)
Commerce and Government Matters

Legislative Districting - Single-Member Delegate Districts

This bill proposes a constitutional amendment to subdivide each legislative district into three single-member delegate districts. If a legislative district is configured so that its population resides in more than one county, the legislative district must be subdivided into single-member districts as follows:

- If the number of residents of a county or a portion of a county within a legislative district is less than the population of a single-member delegate district, the residents must be placed in one single-member delegate district.
- If the number of residents is greater than the population of a single-member delegate district, but less than the population of two single-member delegate districts, then (1) one single-delegate district must consist solely of that county's residents; and (2) the remaining residents of that county must be placed within a second single-member delegate district.
- If the number of residents equals or exceeds the population of two single-member delegate districts, then (1) two single-member delegate districts must consist solely of that county's residents; and (2) the remaining residents must be placed within a third single-member delegate district.

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 subdividing legislative districts into three single-member delegate districts would be minimal, and could be absorbed within the State Administrative Board of Election Law's (SABEL) existing resources. SABEL performs similar tasks following each census.

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 for 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 subdivision of legislative districts. The impact would depend upon the scope of the subdivision 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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