

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 118 (Delegates Arnick and Gettv)
(Commission to Revise the Election Code)

Commerce and Government Matters

Election Law - Political Parties and Nomination of Candidates

This bill changes: (1) the number of petition signatures necessary to form a new political party; (2) the requirements for a new political party to retain its status as a party; and (3) the requirements for a new political party to nominate candidates for office by petition.

This bill is effective January 1, 1999.

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.

Fiscal Analysis

Bill Summary: The number of petition signatures necessary to form a new political party changes from 10,000 to 1% of the total number of registered voters who are eligible to vote in the State as of the first 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 1st in the year of the election.

In addition, the bill provides that after qualifying as a new political party, this status continues until December 31st in the year of the second statewide general election following the party's qualification. For later years, party status is retained through December 31st 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 31st.

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 signing the petition.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 28, 1998

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