

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 848 (Senator Madden)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Voter Registration - Identification as an Independent Voter

This bill requires that the voter registration application produced by the State Board of Elections allow an applicant to request identification as an independent voter. The same application must allow registered voters to change their identification as an independent voter.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill may require minor alterations to the software used by the State Board of Elections to track registered voters. The associated one-time costs are expected to be minimal and could possibly be absorbed within existing resources.

Local Effect: None. Voter registration forms are provided by the State Board of Elections.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: There is no provision requiring voter registration applications to include a place where applicants can identify themselves as independent voters. The forms currently used by the State Board of Elections allow an applicant to “decline to join a party,” but there is no area to declare specifically as an independent voter.

State Expenditures: The State Board of Elections could alter voter registration forms with existing resources allocated for printing applications. The board might need to make some minor revisions to the software used to track registered voters. For example, a new field in the database could be required in order to code independent voters separately from those that decline to affiliate with a political party. The software vendor employed by the board estimates the cost of the revisions at \$4,000, though this type of minor revision might be covered under the ongoing maintenance contract that the board has with the vendor.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1394 (Delegate Kach) - Rules and Executive Nominations.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

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