

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 440 (Senator Harris, *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Election Law – Qualification of Voters - Proof of Identity

The bill alters the method of determining a voter's identity at a polling place on election day. It requires a voter to present either a State voter registration card, a State driver's license, a Social Security card, an identification card issued by a governmental entity, or a photo employee identification card as a form of identification. A voter who does not produce any identification must sign an affidavit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: No effect in FY 2002. Increase in general fund expenditures for voter education through newspaper advertisements by the State Board of Elections in FY 2003 preceding the gubernatorial election and in FY 2004 and 2005 prior to the presidential primary and general election. Costs could range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 in all three years.

Local Effect: The slightly longer voter identification process at the polls could require additional election judges in some counties.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Voter identification is currently made by an election judge who asks for the voter's birth date. The voter's response is compared to the information listed in the precinct register. This bill would require that a voter display an identification card in addition to this procedure.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local expenditures would vary across counties. Montgomery County advises that there could be a modest increase in expenditures due to additional training costs for poll workers. Charles County advises that one additional election judge would be needed in each polling place to perform the extra duties the bill would require. The total increase in expenditures for each election would be \$4,495. This estimate reflects the cost of one additional election judge for 31 polling places at a salary of \$145. Total expenditures for Charles County would increase by \$8,990 in fiscal 2003 for the gubernatorial primary and general election, \$4,495 in fiscal 2004 for the presidential primary, and \$4,495 in fiscal 2005 for the presidential general election. There are no elections scheduled for fiscal 2002. Prince George's County advises that the additional step in the voting process may slow lines somewhat, especially at peak voting times, but is not expected to require additional personnel or expenditures.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced as HB 850 in the 1998 session. It received an unfavorable report from the Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Baltimore City; Charles, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader – February 23, 2001
ef/cer

Analysis by: Michelle L. Davis

Direct Inquiries to:
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510