

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 311 (Delegate Marriott, *et al.*)
(Baltimore City Administration)
Commerce and Government Matters

Elections - Baltimore City - Election Dates

This bill alters the years in which Baltimore City elections are held. A primary election, taking place in September, and a general election, taking place in November, will be held in each year that elections are held for the President of the United States. The first year of the new election cycle for Baltimore City is 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: A one-time cost of approximately \$75,000 in FY 2004 would be necessary for the software vendor employed by the State Board of Elections to reprogram the campaign finance and election management software.

Local Effect: By consolidating the Baltimore City and presidential general elections, one Baltimore City election date is removed from the four-year election cycle, saving the city approximately \$500,000 per cycle. City general fund expenditures would decrease by approximately \$1,000,000 in FY 2004 and would increase by about \$500,000 in FY 2005.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Baltimore elections for municipal offices occur the year after the Maryland Gubernatorial election and the year before a Presidential election. No other Maryland elections are held in conjunction with the Baltimore City elections.

State Fiscal Effect: According to the State Board of Elections and its information technology contractor, the cost to alter the campaign finance software and the pre- and post-election management software would be approximately \$75,000. State Board of Elections expenditures associated with the Baltimore City elections would be transferred into a different fiscal year but would not be materially affected. However, the board advises that costs associated with city elections could be reduced if Baltimore City primaries were combined with presidential primaries.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill would result in a reduction in spending for Baltimore City elections since one fewer election would take place every four-year election cycle. Each separate election requires about \$500,000 to run. Though it is not specified in the bill, Baltimore City has indicated that the next election for city officers would take place in 2004 instead of 2003 (fiscal 2004), allowing the current officeholders to serve five years before the next election. Thus, expenditures would decrease by approximately \$1,000,000 in fiscal 2004. In fiscal 2005 (September 2004), one additional election would be held, resulting in an increase of \$500,000 for election spending. The net impact would be to reduce the funds spent on Baltimore City elections by \$500,000 during each four-year election cycle.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: An identical bill was introduced as HB 782 in the 2000 session. It was not reported from the Senate Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee. SB 330 of the 1999 session would have aligned Baltimore City elections with State elections. The bill passed the Senate but was not reported from the Commerce and Government Matters Committee.

Cross File: SB 452 (Senator McFadden) – Economic and Environmental Affairs.

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

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