

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2001 Session

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 55 (Delegate Zirkin)  
Commerce and Government Matters

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Student Voting Rights Act

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This bill requires a local board of elections, in each precinct in which an institution of higher education is located, to designate at least one polling place on the institution's campus for each election.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None. The operations and finances of the State Board of Elections would not be affected.

**Local Effect:** Aggregate local expenditures could increase by \$472,000 in FY 2003, assuming local boards of elections establish 62 new polling places. Revenues would not be affected. *This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.*

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** Local boards of elections are not required to have a polling place on the campus of an institution of higher education.

**Background:** According to the Maryland Higher Education Commission, institutions of higher education have 62 campuses in the State. Baltimore City has the most campuses with 16. There are four counties without an institution of higher education (Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot, and Worcester). There are 1,666 voting precincts in the State with 1,484 polling places. The number of voters per precinct is as high as 5,000 and as low as 500.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local expenditures will be affected by: (1) the number of campuses of higher education in each jurisdiction; (2) whether new polling places are established; and (3) whether existing polling places are relocated. The average cost for a new polling place is approximately \$5,850. This estimate includes \$2,800 to purchase two additional voting machines; \$500 to purchase ten additional voting booths; \$1,750 for salaries and training costs for ten election judges; and \$800 to notify voters of a new or relocated polling place.

It is not known how many new polling places would be created. The maximum statewide local cost for 62 new polling places would be approximately \$471,200 for fiscal 2003. This estimate assumes \$362,700 for the primary election for equipment and personnel costs and an additional \$108,500 for personnel costs in the general election. Future year expenditures would increase by approximately \$108,500 for each election. There will be one election in fiscal 2004, one election in fiscal 2005, and two elections in fiscal 2007. Baltimore City and Baltimore County, with the highest concentrations of campuses of higher education, would incur most of these additional costs.

If local boards of elections decide to relocate an existing polling place instead of establishing a new polling place, local expenditures would increase by a minimal amount.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** State Board of Elections; Maryland Higher Education Commission; University System of Maryland; Morgan State University; St. Mary's College of Maryland; Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – January 29, 2001  
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