

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 491

(Carroll County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Carroll County - County Commissioners

This emergency bill establishes commissioner district boundaries in Carroll County and specifies eligibility criteria for individuals serving as Carroll County commissioners.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Carroll County expenditures could increase by \$56,300 to create, prepare, and mail voter district notification cards in FY 2007 only. Revenues would not be affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill specifies that an individual is eligible to serve as a county commissioner if the individual:

- is at least 21 years old;
- is a resident of the State and Carroll County;
- has resided in the county for at least one year preceding the election date; and
- has been a resident of his or her district for at least six months prior to the election (if the district to which the individual has been elected has been established for at least six months), or has been a resident of his or her district for as long as it has

been established (if the district to which the individual has been elected has been established for less than six months).

Moreover, the bill repeals the requirement that the Carroll County Commission Redistricting Committee recommend provisions for the staggered terms of office for the county commissioners.

Background: Chapter 417 of 2003 increased the membership of the Carroll County Board of County Commissioners from three to five, to be elected by commissioner district. Before Chapter 417 became effective, it had to be ratified by a majority of votes on a referendum. The Act was ratified by referendum during the 2004 general election, and applies to the election of the board of county commissioners in November 2006.

Chapter 417 also established a seven-member commission redistricting committee that is required to recommend the establishment of five commissioner districts of substantially equal population and provisions for staggered terms of office for the county commissioners. The committee was required to report its recommendations to the Carroll County Legislative Delegation to the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2005 and on or before December 1 following the release of each decennial U.S. census. The committee recommended against staggering the terms of the commissioners; and from the two district options it was considering, the committee recommended the 'Option 2' districting plan. Carroll County advises that the districts, as outlined in the bill, would be the 'Option 1' districting plan.

Carroll County currently has three county commissioners who were elected from the county at-large during the 2002 general election.

There are three types of county governments in Maryland; commission, code home rule, and charter home rule. Eight counties, including Carroll County, operate under the commission form of county government.

Local Fiscal Effect: Carroll County advises that the bill's provisions specifying district boundaries for the Carroll County commissioner districts could increase expenditures by \$56,340 for voter district notification cards in fiscal 2007 only. This total includes \$5,000 for printing 106,000 notifications, \$10,000 for preparing the notifications using an off-site mailing contractor, and \$41,340 in postage at \$0.39 each. The county further advises that there may be additional costs associated with printing different absentee ballots for each commissioner district and for setting up voting machines; however, the county advises that it cannot quantify these expenditures at this time.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Carroll County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2006
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