

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 78 (Senators Kelley and Rosapepe)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Election Judges - Hiring on a Nonpartisan Basis

This bill repeals a requirement that each polling place have an equal number of election judges from the majority party and principal minority party and instead provides that election judges be hired on a nonpartisan basis, without party designation or regard to party affiliation. The bill also provides that in instances where a local board is authorized to provide one or more election judges who are minors (when the total number of election judges for a precinct is six or more) the number of election judges who are minors may not exceed one-third the number of adult election judges.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes could be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Each polling place generally must have at least four election judges (with the exception of precincts with fewer than 200 registered voters, which may have two judges) and an equal number of election judges from the majority party and principal minority party. If the total number of election judges for a precinct is six or more, a local board may provide one or more election judges to that precinct who are not registered with either the majority party or the principal minority party, or who are minors (at least 17 years old), provided that the total number of nonmajority or principal minority party

judges and minor judges does not exceed the lesser of the number of majority party judges or the number of principal minority party judges.

Background: Election officials in a number of counties struggled to recruit adequate numbers of election judges prior to the 2006 primary and general elections. Baltimore City in particular experienced a significant shortage of election judges for the primary elections, which resulted in many of its polling places opening late. One of the difficulties the city and other counties encountered was a shortage of republican judges to satisfy the statutory requirement that each polling place have an equal number of election judges from the majority party and principal minority party.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

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