

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2008 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1575 (Delegate Guzzone)
Ways and Means

Elections - Access to Voting Room and Voting Booth by Minors Not Eligible to
Vote

This bill allows an individual younger than age 18 who accompanies a voter to have access to the voting room at a polling place, subject to specified requirements, including that the individual is not eligible to vote in that election. The bill also provides that an individual older than age 17 may not accompany a voter into a voting booth.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes would not materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: Local boards would incur costs to notify election judges of the change and/or to supplement or reprint election judges' manuals.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: An individual younger than age 13 may accompany a voter into the voting room at a polling place provided the individual is in the care of the voter and does not disrupt or interfere with normal voting procedures. Not more than two individuals younger than age 13 may accompany a voter.

An individual who is 13 or older may not accompany a voter into a voting booth except under specified circumstances in which a voter requires assistance in marking or preparing a ballot because of a physical disability or inability to read the English

language and the voter chooses the individual for assistance. State Board of Elections regulations require an assisting individual to sign a voter assistance record stating, among other things, that they have been asked by the voter for assistance and will not attempt to influence the voter or suggest in any way how the voter should vote.

Chapter 317 of 2004 increased the age limit for a minor individual that may accompany a voter into a voting booth other than for assistance from 10 to 12.

Local Fiscal Effect: SBE indicates the bill would require changes to election judge instruction which local boards may choose to implement through overall reprinting of judge's material or through supplemental instructions. Frederick County, as an example, identified minimal costs to mail information to election judges. Somerset County does not expect its finances to be significantly affected, and Charles County indicates the bill would not have a fiscal impact on the county. To the extent reprinting of judges' manuals would be deemed necessary by a local board, larger jurisdictions have previously indicated costs of \$12,000 and approximately \$20,000 to reprint manuals.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Somerset County, Montgomery County, Charles County, Frederick County, State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 19, 2008
ncs/ljm

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