

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 671  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Hixson, *et al.*)

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Election Law - Polling Places - Electioneering Boundary

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This bill reduces the distance from the entrance and exit of a polling place at which an electioneering boundary must be established (as near as practicable to) at each polling place, from 100 feet to 25 feet.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** The bill's changes are not expected to significantly impact State finances.

**Local Effect:** Local government expenditures may increase to hire additional election judges, revise polling place diagrams/maps, purchase new electioneering boundary signs, and/or to pay higher polling place rental fees or move/consolidate polling places if private polling places become no longer available as a result of the bill's change. Potential expenditure increases cannot be reliably estimated and will vary by county.  
**This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** An electioneering boundary must be established at each polling place, as near as practicable to 100 feet from the entrance and exit, delineated by signs stating, "No Electioneering Beyond this Point." An election judge from each principal political party, acting jointly, post the signs delineating the boundary around the entrance and exit of the building that are closest to the part of the building in which voting occurs.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local government expenditures may increase due to the reduced distance of the electioneering boundary from the entrance and exit of a polling place for a number of reasons. The extent to which expenditures may increase for counties, however, cannot be reliably estimated at this time and will vary by county. Potential causes of increased expenditures (not necessarily applicable in all counties) include:

- a potential need for an additional election judge for polling places to ensure adherence to the 25 foot boundary by persons engaging in electioneering (resulting in additional election judge and training costs);
- a potential need to revise diagrams/maps of polling place sites that many counties use (to provide to election judges, technicians, transportation personnel, election day support personnel, board members, and polling place evaluation teams) to reflect new electioneering boundaries, which could involve travel to the sites and costs for development, duplication, and distribution of new diagrams/maps;
- a potential need for new free-standing signs to be purchased (for counties that do not already have them) to delineate the boundary to the extent, at 25 feet, there are not fences or trees to attach current signs to; and
- a possibility that owners of private buildings used as polling places may charge higher fees for use of a building or no longer allow the building to be used as a polling place due to concerns related to disruption of the property, requiring sites to be moved or consolidated (resulting in voter notification and potentially other costs).

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** State Board of Elections; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Calvert, Frederick, Howard, and Montgomery counties; Baltimore City; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 17, 2009  
mlm/hlb

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