

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2009 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 3
Ways and Means

(Delegate Levy, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - 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 specifies that an individual older than age 17 may not accompany a voter into a voting booth unless the individual is providing specified assistance to a voter.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill's changes are not expected to materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill's changes are not expected to materially affect local government finances.

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.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 1575 of 2008 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee but no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, State Board of Elections, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 8, 2009
ncs/hlb

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510