

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2010 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

House Bill 1493  
Ways and Means

(Delegate Olszewski, *et al.*)

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**Election Law - Voting by Registered Offenders at Polling Places - Prohibition**

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This bill specifies that a registered sex offender may not vote at the offender's assigned polling place on election day or at an early voting center if the polling place or early voting center is located on specified school or child/day care property. The bill repeals an existing exception to a prohibition against registered sex offenders knowingly entering on such property that applies if the person enters the property for the purpose of voting at a school on election day. A registered sex offender may only vote at an early voting center not located on specified school or child/day care property or by absentee ballot. A supervising authority must promptly give written notice of these requirements to each individual who is a registered sex offender on June 1, 2010. The State Board of Elections and the local boards of elections are not required to take any action to implement or administer these provisions.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2010.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill's provisions can be handled with the existing budgeted resources of the State's sex offender registry and any State agencies serving as a supervising authority for an offender.

**Local Effect:** None. The bill's provisions can be handled with the existing budgeted resources of any local agencies serving as a supervising authority for an offender. Any additional need for absentee ballots and related postage costs are assumed to be absorbable by local boards of elections.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Current Law:** A person convicted of a felony is not qualified to be a registered voter while actually serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation, for the conviction. Registered voters, however, generally have the choice of voting in person or by absentee ballot.

Under the Criminal Procedure Article, certain registered sex offenders may not knowingly enter onto real property that is used for public or nonpublic elementary or secondary education or where a State-registered/licensed family day care home, child care home, or child care institution is located. The prohibition, however, does not apply to a registrant who enters real property for the purpose of voting at a school on an election day in the State if the registrant is properly registered to vote, and the registrant's polling place is at the school.

An individual may vote by absentee ballot except to the extent preempted by federal law. An absentee ballot application generally must be received by a local board of elections not later than the Tuesday prior to an election. Absentee ballots are sent to voters as soon as practicable after the receipt and review of an application. A registered voter or the voter's duly authorized agent can also apply for an absentee ballot in person at the local board office through the closing of the polls on election day. Under State Board of Elections regulations, an absentee ballot must be returned to the local board office by the closing of polls on election day or be mailed on or before election day and received by the local board by specified dates and times.

**Background:** There are about 6,400 persons in the current sex offender registry. It is not known how many are barred from real property that is used as a polling place.

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## Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Montgomery and Prince George's counties, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 19, 2010  
ncs/hlb

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