

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 340 (Senator Conway)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Election Law - Voting Rights - Ex-Felons

This bill limits the disqualification of a person from registering to vote for a felony conviction to the period when the individual is serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction (eliminating the inclusion of any term of parole or probation).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures increase by \$10,000 in FY 2015 to revise and reprint Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) forms containing voter registration qualifications. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
SF Expenditure	10,000	0	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$10,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note:() = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate effect

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An individual is not qualified to be a registered voter if the individual has been convicted of a felony and is actually serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation, for the conviction.

Background: State law regarding disqualification from registering to vote based on a criminal conviction or convictions was last modified under Chapter 159 of 2007. The changes under Chapter 159 included the repeal of a provision requiring an individual with a second or subsequent conviction of theft or other infamous crime to allow three years to elapse after completing the individual's court-ordered sentence as well as the repeal of a provision permanently disqualifying an individual who had been convicted of a second or subsequent crime of violence.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) indicates that state approaches to felon disenfranchisement vary significantly, but in 38 states and the District of Columbia, most ex-felons automatically gain the right to vote on the completion of their sentence. According to NCSL, most recent legislation, since 1996, has sought to expand felon voting rights and ease the process of voting rights restoration.

State Expenditures: TTF expenditures increase by \$10,000 in fiscal 2015 for one-time revision and reprinting of MVA forms containing voter registration qualifications. Costs are incurred in fiscal 2015 to implement changes prior to the bill's effective date of July 1, 2015.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 980 (Delegate McCray, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Maryland Department of Transportation, National Conference of State Legislatures, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 2015
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