

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 592 (Senator Bates, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Joint Committee on Election Oversight - Establishment

This bill establishes a Joint Committee on Election Oversight to improve election administration and campaign finance regulation in the State.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill can be implemented with existing resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: To improve election administration and campaign finance regulation in the State, the committee must:

- study the budgets, programs, and policies of the State Board of Elections (SBE) and the local boards of elections to determine ways in which the General Assembly may improve election administration and campaign finance regulation;
- examine election statutes and court decisions to determine any legislative changes that are needed to improve election administration and campaign finance regulation;
- study initiatives in other states regarding election administration and campaign finance regulation to provide an ongoing commentary to the General Assembly on the initiatives and to make recommendations for implementing similar initiatives in the State;

- identify new laws, regulations, programs, services, and budgetary priorities to improve election administration and campaign finance regulation in the State; and
- study any other election matters that the committee considers necessary to fulfill its mandate.

The committee may hold a hearing on any matter relating to the functions of the committee and consider a vote on a bill or resolution referred to the committee by the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House.

The Department of Legislative Services must provide staff assistance to the committee.

The committee must submit a report to the General Assembly, by December 1 each year, which includes a description of the work of the committee and any recommendations of the committee.

Current Law/Background: SBE and local boards of elections administer elections for county, Baltimore City, State, and federal offices, and SBE regulates campaign financing for county, Baltimore City, and State offices.

SBE's responsibilities include (1) policymaking; (2) management and coordination of statewide election systems (*e.g.*, voting system, voter registration system); (3) regulation of campaign financing; and (4) supervision and support of local boards of elections.

Local boards of elections responsibilities include (1) administration of voter registration; (2) hiring and training of election judges; (3) mailing of specimen (sample) ballots; (4) processing absentee ballot applications; (5) voting equipment testing; (6) establishing, staffing, supervising, and supporting early voting centers and polling places; and (7) canvassing (vote counting).

The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and the House Appropriations Committee evaluate the State Board of Elections' budget, and the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee consider legislation affecting election administration and campaign finance regulation. These committees, as standing committees, are authorized, while the General Assembly is not in session, to study and prepare recommendations and reports on any matter that is within the usual and customary jurisdiction of the committee.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2018
mm/hlb

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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