

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 230

(Senator Hough)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Election Law - Canvassing of Absentee Ballots - Reporting Unofficial Results

This bill requires a local board of elections, at the end of each day of absentee ballot canvassing, to prepare and release a report of the unofficial results of the absentee ballot vote tabulation.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill does not affect State finances.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to affect local government finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Following an election, each local board of elections must meet at its designated counting center to canvass absentee ballots cast in that election in accordance with the regulations and guidelines established by the State Board of Elections (SBE). “Canvass” means the entire process of vote tallying, vote tabulation, and vote verification or audit, culminating in the production and certification of the official election results. For absentee ballots, the “canvass” includes the opening of any envelope accompanying an absentee ballot and the assembly and review of absentee ballots in preparation for vote tallying.

SBE regulations require that local boards of elections start to canvass absentee ballots at 10 a.m. on the Thursday after the election, and start the second absentee ballot canvass at

10 a.m. on the second Friday after an election. The regulations require the unofficial results of the absentee canvass to be released when the tabulation is completed.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Anne Arundel, Charles, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2019
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