

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 154 (Senator Simonaire)
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Election Day - Opening Time for Polling Places

This bill requires that a polling place be open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. on Election Day, rather than from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. The bill also requires that an election judge arrive at the polling place and set up the polling place to assure that the polls will be open and operational at 6 a.m. rather than at 7 a.m.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$2,600 each year beginning in FY 2020. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	2,600	2,600	2,600	2,600	2,600
Net Effect	(\$2,600)	(\$2,600)	(\$2,600)	(\$2,600)	(\$2,600)

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

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase annually beginning in FY 2020. Revenues are not affected. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: On an Election Day, a polling place must be open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. A voter who has appeared at a polling place by the closing hour to cast a ballot must be allowed to vote.

In accordance with instructions provided by the election director, an election judge must arrive at the polling place and, under the direction of the chief judge, set up the polling place to assure that the polls will be open and operational at 7 a.m.

For the 2018 general election, there were 1,578 polling places across the State.

State Fiscal Effect: Requiring polling places to open an hour early on Election Day is expected to increase State and local boards of elections' costs.

Both the State and local boards of elections' costs increase minimally for additional compensation of voting system support personnel, which is a voting system cost shared by the State and local boards of elections. General fund expenditures increase by not more than \$2,600 annually, beginning in fiscal 2020, and local government expenditures also increase collectively by not more than \$2,600 annually, beginning in fiscal 2020.

Local boards of elections may also incur additional costs, for additional compensation of local board of elections personnel and election judges and potentially also for notification of voters of the new hours and extended use of rented polling place facilities. Of a small number of counties contacted about the impact, Harford, Talbot, and Wicomico counties estimate their costs increase by \$12,800, \$28,300, and \$10,000 in fiscal 2020, respectively, with ongoing costs incurred in future years.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Baltimore City; Harford, Talbot, and Wicomico counties; Department of Legislative Services

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sb/hlb

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