

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

First Reader

House Bill 816

(Delegates J. Lewis and R. Lewis)

Environment and Transportation

Real Property - Residential Leases - Voter Registration

This bill requires that a landlord provide a tenant – no later than 15 days after the date of occupancy – with a State voter registration application for each individual at least age 16 who is authorized to reside at the residential rental property. A landlord that fails to comply with the requirement is liable for \$25 in damages for each voter registration application the landlord failed to provide. A landlord may raise as a defense all reasonable attempts by the landlord to deliver the voter registration applications. The bill may not be construed to require a landlord to assist a resident with completion of a State voter registration application.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to materially affect State finances.

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

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: Under State law, with certain exceptions, an individual may register to vote if the individual is a citizen of the United States, is at least age 16, and is a resident of the State as of the day the individual seeks to register.

An individual may apply to become a registered voter through a number of means including (1) visiting an election board office; (2) by mail; (3) when applying for services at a voter registration agency (specified public and nongovernmental agencies designated by the

State Board of Elections (SBE), including agencies providing public assistance and services for individuals with disabilities, public higher education institutions, military recruiting offices, and one-stop career centers in the Maryland Department of Labor); (4) during an applicable transaction at automatic voter registration agencies, which are the Motor Vehicle Administration, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, local departments of social services, and the Mobility Certification Office in the Maryland Transit Administration; or (5) through SBE's online voter registration system.

As of January 2020, there were 4.0 million active registered voters in the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 5 of 2018, a similar bill, received a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee but was subsequently withdrawn.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 21, 2020
an/jkb

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

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