

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 702 (Delegate Hill)
 Ways and Means

Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance

This bill requires that training materials for election judges include specified instruction in the various methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting at a polling site. The bill also requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) to develop a specified sign to be posted at specified locations at each polling place that states the various methods election judges may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting. **The bill takes effect January 1, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures may increase by at least \$25,000 in FY 2024. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	25,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	\$0	(\$25,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase, beginning in FY 2024, as discussed below. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires that the training materials used by the program of instruction of election judges developed by SBE, in consultation with the local boards of elections, include oral and written instruction in the various methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting at a polling site, including the ability to provide individualized accommodations at the request of a voter or an individual who accompanies a voter in need of assistance.

The bill also requires SBE to develop a sign to be posted at specified locations at each polling place that states the various methods election judges may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting, including the ability to provide individualized accommodations at the request of a voter or an individual who accompanies a voter in need of assistance. The sign must be, at a minimum, 24 inches by 36 inches in size and posted (1) in a prominent location outside the entrance of the building in which the polling place is located; (2) at the entrance to the room in which the polling place is located; and (3) near the check-in desk.

Current Law: SBE is required to develop (and oversee the implementation of), in consultation with the local boards of elections, a program of instruction of election judges. The training materials used by the program may include (1) an instruction manual and other written directives; (2) curriculum for training sessions; and (3) audiovisuals. SBE must provide election judges with uniform statewide training on the voting system, including (1) all features of the voting system that provide access to voters with disabilities and (2) the rights of voters with disabilities, including those rights guaranteed by State and federal law. Each local board must conduct election judge training based on the program developed by SBE, and each election judge, unless appointed under emergency circumstances, must participate in the program.

SBE, in consultation with the election directors of the local boards, must specify and produce certain informational materials to be posted in each polling place, including instructions relating to the availability of assistance to elderly and disabled voters.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures may increase in fiscal 2024 to the extent SBE needs to hire a consultant to assist the board in developing the portion of the program of instruction for election judges that covers assisting or accommodating elderly and disabled voters. The cost of such a contract may be at least \$25,000, to conduct outreach to local boards of elections and the disability community, research best practices, and develop the instructions. To the extent a partnership or grant funding can be used to develop the instructions, there may be no material impact on general fund expenditures.

Local Fiscal Effect: Local government expenditures are expected to increase, beginning in fiscal 2024, for the cost of the signs required by the bill and potentially additional training costs to implement the oral and written instruction in the various methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting at a polling site. Costs for the signs may vary considerably, depending on the type of sign that is used to implement the bill. *For illustrative purposes*, if there are at least 1,600 polling places across the State during the 2024 elections, and three signs are purchased for each polling place, at a cost of \$25 per sign (for free-standing signs, such as A-frame signs), local government expenditures increase by at least \$120,000, collectively.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 245 of 2021 received a hearing in the House Ways and Means Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Harford and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2022
rh/hlb

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