

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2023 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 616 (Delegate D. Barnes, *et al.*)
 Ways and Means

Election Law – Early Voting – Number of Days

This bill decreases, from eight to five, the number of days during which early voting centers are open for regular primary and general elections, so that early voting centers are open from the second Sunday before a primary or general election through the Thursday before the election. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures decrease by \$61,700 annually beginning in FY 2024. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	(61,700)	(61,700)	(61,700)	(61,700)	(61,700)
Net Effect	\$61,700	\$61,700	\$61,700	\$61,700	\$61,700

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

Local Effect: Local government expenditures decrease annually beginning in FY 2024, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Early voting centers are open, in a regular primary or general election, from the second Thursday before the election through the Thursday before the election during the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. each early voting day.

State and Local Fiscal Effect: Decreasing the number of days early voting centers are open is expected to decrease the State and local boards of elections' costs beginning in fiscal 2024.

State and local boards' costs decrease from a reduction in voting support personnel expenses under the State Board of Elections' (SBE) staffing contract (for personnel under the contract assisting with early voting in certain counties). In accordance with the State's cost-sharing structures with the local boards, these expenses are shared 50/50 by the State and the counties. General fund expenditures and local government expenditures each decrease by approximately \$61,700 each year, beginning in fiscal 2024.

Local boards of elections' costs also decrease, collectively, by approximately \$1.2 million annually beginning in fiscal 2024, representing the cost savings for election judge compensation for the three fewer days of early voting. This estimate is based on information provided by SBE and the local boards of elections on the number of election judges needed to staff early voting centers and associated election judge salaries.

Local boards of elections, in at least some counties, are also expected to experience reductions in other costs of administering early voting, but a statewide estimate of those costs has not been quantified.

Of a small number of counties contacted about their overall reduction in early voting costs (including costs for election judges) as a result of the bill:

- Baltimore City estimates a decrease in expenditures of approximately \$130,000 in fiscal 2024, and ongoing savings in future years, consisting of cost savings from election judge compensation, rental of seven voting centers, and on-site technician compensation;
- Carroll County estimates a decrease in expenditures of approximately \$55,000 in fiscal 2024, and ongoing savings in future years, consisting of cost savings from election judge compensation, staff overtime and compensatory time, and rental of one voting center;
- Harford County estimates a decrease in expenditures of approximately \$150,000 in fiscal 2024, and ongoing savings in future years, consisting of cost savings from election judge and staff compensation, rental of two voting centers, and rental of one passenger van;
- St. Mary's County estimates a decrease in expenditures of approximately \$65,000 in fiscal 2024, and ongoing savings in future years, consisting of cost savings from election judge compensation and rental of three voting centers; and
- Washington County estimates a net decrease in expenditures of approximately \$5,000 in fiscal 2024 and \$55,000 annually thereafter, consisting of ongoing cost

savings from election judge and deputy sheriffs' compensation and rental of two voting centers, and a one-time increase in costs to prepare and send voter notification materials (future years reflect the elimination of the one-time costs).

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City; Carroll, Harford, St. Mary's, and Washington counties; State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

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