

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 265 (Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections
Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Secretary of
State)
Government, Labor, and Elections

**State Board of Elections - Address Confidentiality Program - Designation of
Contact Person**

This departmental bill requires the State Board of Elections (SBE) to designate a contact person for the Address Confidentiality Program to act as a contact for inquiries about the program from local boards of elections and program participants. It further specifies that each local board of elections must use a program participant's actual address for absentee ballots. The bill authorizes SBE to adopt related regulations. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: SBE can designate a contact person for the Address Confidentiality Program and establish related regulations using existing resources. No effect on revenues.

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

Small Business Effect: The Office of the Secretary of State has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: The Secretary of State (SOS) administers the Address Confidentiality Program for survivors of threatened, attempted, or actual domestic

violence, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, or human trafficking. The program is intended to enable State and local agencies to respond to requests for public records without disclosing the location of a survivor of specified crimes and also enable program participants to use an address designated by SOS as a substitute address. SOS collaborates with the District Court and the circuit courts, the Motor Vehicle Administration, SBE, public schools, and other agencies to provide address confidentiality to program participants. Generally, program participation is for four years. Additional information about the program can be found on the program's [website](#).

Local boards of election must use a program participant's actual address for all election-related purposes. A program participant may not use the substitute address designated by SOS as the program participant's address for voter registration purposes. A local board of elections may not make a program participant's address contained in voter registration records available for public inspection or copying except on request by a law enforcement agency for law enforcement purposes, and as directed by a court order to disclose the address.

SOS advises that the bill is intended to ensure program participants can speak directly with SBE, who can then provide quick responses on election-related questions. SOS advises that current practice requires immediate turnarounds of requests and to do this effectively, SOS must be able to contact a trained professional in SBE who can coordinate with the local boards of elections and can rectify issues in a timely manner.

SBE advises the bill should reduce the number of election staff and interagency interactions involved in the maintenance of voter registrations and issuing mail-in ballots to program participants.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 91 (Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)(By Request - Departmental - Secretary of State) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles, Dorchester, and Howard counties; Secretary of State; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 19, 2026
sj/mcr

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ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: State Board of Elections - Address Confidentiality Program - Designation of Contact Person

BILL NUMBER: HB 265

PREPARED BY: Michael Lore

PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

 X WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESS

OR

 WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL
BUSINESSES

PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS