

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
 First Reader

House Bill 1407 (Delegate Rosenberg)
 Government, Labor, and Elections

Election Law - Absentee Ballots - Notice of Timely Receipt

This bill – if there is federal judicial action regarding timely receipt of absentee ballots with federal contests that preempts State Board of Elections (SBE) regulations – requires the State Administrator of Elections to provide additional notice to voters in the State of federal and State ballot receipt deadlines. At minimum, the notice must encourage an early return of absentee ballots by urging voters to (1) mail an absentee ballot at least one week before Election Day or (2) place the ballot in an official ballot drop box on or before Election Day. The State Administrator must use multiple methods to provide the notice, including written notice with instructions for sample ballots and ballots, a social media campaign, and mass media communications. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2026, and terminates November 30, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$282,500 in FY 2026 and by \$182,000 in FY 2027. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	282,500	182,000	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$282,500)	(\$182,000)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase, collectively, by \$282,500 in FY 2026 and by \$182,000 in FY 2027. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: An absentee ballot must be deemed timely received if it is received in accordance with the regulations and guidelines established by SBE; however, an absentee ballot that is received after the deadline specified by the regulations and guidelines may not be counted.

Under SBE regulations, an absentee ballot is considered timely only if the ballot:

- is received by the local board office before the polls close on Election Day;
- is received by a polling place before the polls close at that polling place on Election Day;
- is deposited into a ballot drop box before the polls close on Election Day;
- (1) is received by the local board office from the United States Postal Service (USPS) or a private mail carrier on or before 10 a.m. on the second Friday after an election and (2) was mailed by Election Day, as verified by a postmark of USPS, an Army Post Office, a Fleet Post Office, or the postal service of any other country or by the voter's affidavit that the ballot was completed and mailed by Election Day, if the return envelope does not contain a postmark or the postmark is illegible; or
- is received by an early voting center before the polls close at that polling place on the last day of early voting.

State and Local Fiscal Effect: State general fund and local government expenditures each increase by \$282,500 in fiscal 2026 and by \$182,000 in fiscal 2027 for costs to provide notice to voters of ballot receipt deadlines. The estimate reflects the following costs:

- **Voter Outreach** (*State – \$150,000; local – \$150,000*) – SBE indicates that costs to conduct a mass media and social media campaign designed to inform the public of ballot receipt deadline requirements under federal and State law are expected to total \$300,000. In accordance with the State's current cost-sharing with the local boards of elections, statewide voter outreach costs are assumed to be split evenly between SBE and the local boards. Similar voter outreach costs are expected to be incurred in fiscal 2027 for the 2026 general election.
- **Written Notice** (*State – \$132,500; local – \$132,500*) – For fiscal 2026, costs are assumed to be shared between SBE and the local boards to mail notices to mail-in voters regarding ballot receipt deadlines, assuming a federal judicial action occurs relatively close to the 2026 primary election and written notice is not able to be provided with the mail-in ballots themselves, and, for fiscal 2027 (covering the 2026 general election), costs are incurred to include an additional ballot card in each mail-in ballot packet sent to mail-in voters to provide notice of ballot receipt deadlines (*State – \$32,000; local – \$32,000*).

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2026
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