

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 567 (Senator Ready, *et al.*)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Elections - In-Person Voting - Proof of Identity

This bill requires that each individual seeking to vote in person prove the individual's identity by presenting to an election judge (1) a valid government-issued photo identification or (2) a valid non-government-issued photo identification and a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document that states the voter's name and address. A voter who is unable to provide the allowable forms of identification must vote a provisional ballot. The bill also prohibits willfully and knowingly voting or attempting to vote under a false form of identification, with violations subject to existing criminal penalties. **The bill takes effect January 1, 2027.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by at least \$275,000 in FY 2028 and at least \$250,000 in FY 2029 through 2031, as discussed below. The bill's criminal penalty provisions are not expected to materially affect State finances.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase for voter outreach and additional election judges, pollbook equipment, local board staff, provisional ballot materials, and canvassing personnel, as discussed below. The bill's criminal penalty provisions are not expected to materially affect local government finances. **This bill imposes a mandate on a unit of local government.**

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: For each individual who seeks to vote, an election judge has to:

- locate the voter's name in the election register or inactive list;
- establish the voter's identity by requesting that the voter state his or her month and day of birth and comparing the response to the information in the election register;
- verify the address of the voter's residence, unless the voter's personal information has been deemed confidential by the local board of elections, in which case an alternative verification method, established by the State Board of Elections (SBE), must be conducted; and
- have the voter sign a voting authority card.

Upon completion of those procedures, a voter is entitled to vote a regular ballot. If a voter's name is not found on the election register or the inactive voter list, the voter is referred to vote a provisional ballot.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures are expected to increase by at least \$275,000 in fiscal 2028 for costs associated with (1) additional statewide voter outreach prior to the 2028 presidential primary election, regarding the voter identification requirement and (2) SBE's redevelopment of procedures/materials and efforts to train local board of elections staff.

SBE indicates that costs of additional voter outreach are expected to total at least \$500,000 for direct voter contact (mail, email, and text message), radio and television advertising, and digital communication efforts. In accordance with the State's current cost-sharing with the local boards of elections, these additional 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 2029 through 2031 for outreach prior to the 2028 presidential general election and 2030 gubernatorial elections but will subsequently diminish as voters become more accustomed to the requirement.

SBE also estimates that expenditures increase by \$25,000, in fiscal 2028 only, to (1) redevelop election judge procedures, training materials, and polling place signs and (2) train local board of elections staff. Consistent with how costs are shared between SBE and the local boards of elections, SBE generally pays for expenses that are not directly attributable to any one local board but benefit all local boards.

General fund expenditures further increase for additional pollbooks and pollbook printers, and the State's cost to reimburse local boards for a share of the extra compensation paid to returning election judges operating the additional pollbooks, to the extent local boards of

elections need additional pollbooks and election judges (it is expected that at least some will), to mitigate additional time added to the voting process by the voter identification requirement. It is assumed that (1) the costs of the additional pollbooks are shared by the State and the local boards of elections in accordance with current cost-sharing and (2) on average, half of the additional election judges needed to operate the pollbooks will be returning election judges, for which SBE will need to pay \$50 of the minimum \$100 extra compensation paid to each returning election judge (pursuant to [§ 10-205](#) of the Election Law Article).

The number of additional pollbooks and pollbook printers, and election judges, needed statewide cannot be reliably estimated at this time; however, for illustrative purposes, if an additional pollbook, pollbook printer, and election judge is needed at 25% of election day polling places and at each early voting center, SBE costs increase by approximately \$532,000 in fiscal 2028 for the pollbooks and pollbook printers and by approximately \$28,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2028 to reimburse local boards for returning election judge extra compensation. This estimate reflects the costs for the new pollbook to be deployed for the 2028 elections. To the extent that local boards choose to finance the purchase of the pollbooks (SBE indicates that it will be each individual local board's choice) rather than pay for the full cost of the new pollbooks up front, the \$532,000 is at least partially distributed over a period of years, likely three or five years.

SBE anticipates an additional one-time cost for pollbook software modifications; however, because the scope and requirements of those modifications are not yet known, the associated costs cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

Local Fiscal Effect: Expenditures are expected to increase for local boards of elections for the 2028 presidential primary election and future elections to account for costs of voter outreach and additional election judges, pollbook equipment, local board staff, provisional ballot materials, and canvassing personnel. As previously noted, local boards of elections:

- are assumed to be responsible for one-half of the amount of the costs of additional statewide voter outreach (at least \$250,000 in fiscal 2028 through 2031); and
- also pay for (1) one-half of the costs for any additional pollbooks and pollbook printers (which, under the illustrative example in the State Fiscal Effect above, total approximately \$532,000, for the counties collectively, with individual counties paying for the cost of the pollbooks they need either entirely in fiscal 2028 or over a financing period of likely three or five years), and (2) the full base salary for election judges and the remaining \$50 of the minimum extra compensation paid to returning election judges (approximately \$351,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2028, for the counties collectively, under the assumptions identified under the illustrative example in the State Fiscal Effect, plus an assumption that the election judges are paid the minimum base salary of \$250).

Based on information provided by a small number of counties, costs may vary significantly by county – depending on a county’s approach to implementing the bill – for costs incurred for pollbooks, pollbook printers, and election judges, as well as other costs, such as local board voter outreach to supplement statewide voter outreach, or temporary personnel costs incurred to canvass an increased number of provisional ballots cast by those without sufficient identification.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See HB 91 of 2025; HB 192 and SB 772 of 2024; and HB 35 and SB 567 of 2023.

Designated Cross File: HB 462 (Delegate R. Long, *et al.*) - Government, Labor, and Elections.

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

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