

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 1289 (Delegate Terrasa)  
 Government, Labor, and Elections

Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting

This bill establishes a Task Force on the Implementation of Approval Voting and Ranked-Choice Voting, staffed by the State Board of Elections (SBE), to (1) review approval voting and ranked-choice voting use in other jurisdictions in the United States; (2) evaluate administrative and fiscal impacts on SBE and local boards of elections; (3) examine impacts on voter participation, voter understanding, election outcomes, and representation; (4) consider pilot programs or local implementation options; (5) analyze constitutional and legal considerations; (6) identify necessary statutory or regulatory changes for implementation; and (7) develop findings and recommendations for legislative or administrative action, and report on them by December 1, 2027. **The bill terminates June 30, 2028.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$67,900 in FY 2027 and \$32,200 in FY 2028. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	67,900	32,200	0	0	0
Net Effect	(\$67,900)	(\$32,200)	\$0	\$0	\$0

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

**Local Effect:** The bill does not directly affect local government finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

### Current Law:

#### *Uniform Election Process*

State election law, which generally governs all elections except municipal elections (other than in Baltimore City), requires that the electoral process for primary elections, general elections, and special elections be uniform, except where it would be inappropriate, or where exceptions are provided for in the law.

#### *Voting/Tabulation Method*

Generally, in elections governed by State election law, voters are able to choose in each race a number of candidates equal to the number of offices being filled in that race (*e.g.*, one candidate in a State Senate race and three candidates in some House of Delegates races), and the winners are nominated or elected based on which candidates receive the greatest number of votes.

**State Fiscal Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$67,935 in fiscal 2027, which accounts for the bill's October 1, 2026 effective date. This estimate reflects the cost for SBE to hire one contractual staff position to assist in staffing the workgroup and completing the required report. SBE indicates that existing staff are not able to take on this additional work. The estimate includes a salary, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Contractual Position	1.0
Salary and Fringe Benefits	\$58,794
Operating Expenses	<u>9,141</u>
<b>Total FY 2027 State Expenditures</b>	<b>\$67,935</b>

Fiscal 2028 expenditures, of \$32,248, reflect termination of the contractual position on December 1, 2027, when the final report is due.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State's implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Any expense reimbursements for workgroup members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

## Additional Information

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

**Designated Cross File:** SB 800 (Senator McKay) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 24, 2026  
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