

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-1536

AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RANKED-CHOICE VOTING
IN PARTY CAUCUSES, CONVENTIONS AND PRIMARIES,
INCLUDING PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARIES, AND IN
CERTAIN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	965,791- 1,365,751	1,461,583
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	101,619	170,306

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Various Municipalities	Cost	None	Up to 2,400,000

Explanation

The bill authorizes ranked choice voting (RCV) for presidential preference primaries beginning in FY 28, and for municipal elections and all other primaries beginning in FY 27 resulting in the fiscal impacts described below.

Section 1 of the bill requires the Secretary of the State (SOTS) to set the type of ballot to be used in RCV elections and the secretary to

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.71% of payroll in FY 26.

preapprove the RCV ballots prior to printing and usage requiring SOTS to hire one employee² at a cost of \$129,683 in FY 26 and FY 27 with an associated fringe cost of \$61,081. The SOTS will need two³ additional positions at a cost of \$145,832 beginning in FY 27, with an associated fringe cost of \$68,687. These positions are required to approve and oversee the design of RCV ballots in each participating municipality in compliance with the provisions of this section.

Additionally, this section requires that voting tabulators under certain conditions can process RCV ballots and produce applicable information from the ballots processed resulting in a one-time cost to the state of \$750,000 to \$1,050,000 in FY 26 and an ongoing cost beginning in FY 27 of \$100,000. The FY 26 cost is associated with the software⁴ required for tabulators to process RCV ballots, and software to update the states Election Management System (EMS) and Election Night Reporting System (ENR)⁵ to display and count RCV ballots. The FY 27 cost is associated with the maintenance and upkeep of the upgraded systems.

Sections 3-7 establish a variety of provisions related to RCV for municipal elections, party conventions and most primaries beginning in FY 27 resulting in a cost to municipalities of up to \$2,400,000⁶ beginning in FY 27. This cost is associated with additional labor costs, and printing costs related to the implementation of RCV. The exact cost will vary by town, the number of towns that adopt RCV, and if a major party were to adopt RCV for primaries.

To support participating municipalities, the SOTS will need to conduct a public information campaign to inform the public of changes to current procedures resulting in a cost of approximately \$1,000,000 in

²This position is an RCV Program Manager position.

³These positions include an Administrative Assistant, and an Elections Officer.

⁴The software itself is open source but would need to be calibrated for usage in Connecticut and is expected to cost between \$100,000-\$500,000.

⁵This is expected to cost approximately \$650,000 in FY 26.

⁶This figure assumes full implementation of RCV for the primary election beginning in FY 27. This includes the cost of RCV ballots, additional labor for each polling station, and transport costs for secure transport memory sticks from the town to SOTS.

FY 27. This funding is required to support public awareness of voting changes, and procedures to reduce the number of ineligible ballots during participating elections.

These sections also require SOTS to create regulations to implement RCV where it is adopted, requiring SOTS to hire an additional durational staff member⁷ at a cost of \$86,068 in FY 26 and FY 27, with an associated fringe cost of \$40,538 in FY 26 and FY 27. This position is required to facilitate the adoption of regulations base on best practices in RCV voting.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation, wage increases, and the number of municipalities and parties that adopt RCV as a result of this bill. The cost of the durational employee will terminate in FY 27 unless continued.

⁷ This position is a Staff Attorney I.