

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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HB-7228

AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REFORMS TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS IN THIS STATE.

AMENDMENT

LCO No.: 10591

File Copy No.: 693

House Calendar No.: 433

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	1,650,000	455,000
Secretary of the State	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 26 \$	FY 27 \$
All Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Cost	2,000	88,000

Explanation

The amendment strikes the underlying bill and results in the fiscal impacts described below.

Section 1 of the amendment makes a variety of changes to election procedures including requiring that attestations that were previously

¹ State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

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(SM)

recorded on the back of the early voting envelope, into a logbook to be developed by the Secretary of the State (SOTS) resulting in a cost to SOTS and municipalities. This cost is associated with the printing of logbooks, and the development of a standard form.

Section 25 requires the SOTS to hire and install an election monitor for Bridgeport and to conduct a bilingual voter information campaign at a cost of \$250,000 in FY 26 and FY 27. The Election Monitor² will oversee covered elections, conduct investigations as required, and report any irregularities. The public information campaign³ will inform voters in Bridgeport of their rights under Title 9 in both English and Spanish.

Section 26 empowers SOTS to commence a declaratory judgment action in court under certain circumstances resulting in a potential cost to the state. The exact cost will depend on the number of declaratory judgements pursued.

Sections 30-41 of the amendment implements risk limiting audits (RLA) and results in costs to SOTS of \$1.4 million in FY 26 and \$205,000 in FY 27 and annually thereafter. There will also be a cost of \$2,000 in FY 26 and \$88,000 in FY 27 to municipalities to support the implementation of risk limiting audits.

This will require a one-time cost to support equipment for municipalities of \$1,000,000 in FY 26. This includes equipment to be paid for by the Secretary of the State and distributed to municipalities. There will be an additional one-time cost of \$15,000 for software to support a pilot program and \$200,000 to support the initial development of the program in FY 26. The development costs, which are paid by SOTS but ultimately borne by University of Connecticut Voter Center, are associated with developing and testing auditing software and processes and conducting the audits.

² The election monitor is expected to cost \$150,000 in FY 26 and FY 27.

³ The public information campaign is expected to cost \$100,000 in FY 26 and FY 27.

These sections create several ongoing costs, including \$80,000 in FY 26 and FY 27 for risk limiting audit software licensing. There will be an additional cost of \$125,000 in FY 26 and FY 27 associated with ongoing maintenance and upkeep costs.

The amendment alters standards of risk limiting audits and results in additional costs to municipalities. This comes primarily from the additional cost of labor to complete risk limiting audits. The bill requires that the officials administering and conducting the risk limiting audit must be compensated at the municipalities standard rate of pay for electors. In FY 26, this is limited to a pilot program encompassing three municipalities with an expected cost of \$2,000. Once implemented, the cost depends on the requirements of the risk limiting audits, the number of them conducted and the level of compensation for the election officials within each municipality is estimated at around \$88,000 if a statewide office were to require a risk limiting audit⁴.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue subject to inflation and the number of and complexity of risk limiting audits carried out annually. In addition, there is an anticipated to be an average annual replacement cost of \$155,000 for the equipment; the exact cost will vary year-to-year.

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

⁴ This figure assumes five employees working for four hours in each town, to complete the RLA. This assumes the estimated hourly rate and is anticipated to cost approximately \$88,000.