

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-386

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 27 \$	FY 28 \$	FY 29 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	973,000	1.4 million	306,000
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	91,000	152,000	116,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 27 \$	FY 28 \$	FY 29 \$
All Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ² - Potential Cost	None	1.1 million	1.1 million to 2.4 million

Explanation

The bill allows ranked choice voting (RCV) for all primaries and municipal elections beginning in FY 28 if state parties and municipalities, respectively, choose to adopt it, resulting in a cost to the

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 41.82% of payroll in FY 27.

² 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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General Fund of approximately \$1.1 million in FY 27 and \$1.5 million in FY 28, and a potential cost to municipalities of approximately \$1.1 million in FY 28. Costs shift in the out years as described below.

Secretary of the State

The bill results in Personal Services Costs to SOTS of \$216,000 in FY 27 and \$362,000 in FY 28, associated with four new positions needed to implement RCV, assuming that either a political party or any town adopts RCV. SOTS must preapprove RCV ballots prior to printing and usage, requiring SOTS to hire one employee³ at a cost of \$130,000 in FY 27 and annually thereafter, with an associated annual fringe cost of \$55,000. Additionally, SOTS will require two⁴ positions at an annual combined cost of \$146,000 beginning in FY 28, with an associated fringe cost of \$61,000. These positions are needed to implement and oversee the development of the RCV process, and to approve and oversee the design of RCV ballots in each participating municipality to comply with the provisions of the bill. Finally, to develop RCV regulations, SOTS will need to hire an additional durational staff member⁵ at a cost of \$86,000 in both FY 27 and FY 28, with an associated fringe cost of \$36,000 in FY 27 and FY 28.

The bill also results in an Other Expenses cost to SOTS of \$757,000 in FY 27 and \$1.03 million in FY 28, primarily related to voting equipment and technology needs, along with a public information campaign. Upgrades to the state's Election Management System are required to process RCV ballots and produce RCV results, which has a one-time cost to SOTS of \$650,000 in FY 27. There is also a \$85,000 cost in FY 27 to upgrade the election night reporting system, with an ongoing annual cost of \$30,000 beginning in FY 28, as the system will be more expensive to operate due to RCV. Because of the additional complexity of operating the system, SOTS will incur an additional cost of \$22,000 in FY 27 to develop training for registrars and poll workers to facilitate

³This position is an RCV Program Manager position.

⁴These positions include an Administrative Assistant and an Elections Officer.

⁵ This position is a Staff Attorney I.

RCV.

To support participating municipalities, SOTS will need to conduct a public information campaign to inform the public of changes to current procedures, towards the goal of reducing the number of ineligible ballots, resulting in a one-time cost of \$1 million in FY 28.

Municipalities

The bill empowers but does not require municipalities to use RCV beginning in FY 28 in municipal elections, and municipalities would be required to use RCV if adopted by a major party, resulting in a potential aggregate cost to municipalities of \$1.1 million⁶ if a party adopts RCV for the presidential preference primary in spring 2028. This cost includes additional labor and printing expenses associated with implementing RCV. Per town costs are anticipated to range from: (1) \$2,000 to \$4,500 for towns with up to 10,000 registered voters, to (2) \$30,000 up to \$65,500 for towns with more than 50,000 registered voters.

The Out Years

The cost to implement RCV is expected to shift again in the out years, with a total annual cost to the General Fund of \$422,000 beginning in FY 29 and an annual cost to municipalities of between \$1.1 million and \$2.4 million beginning in FY 29.

The SOTS cost will decline to \$306,000 annually beginning in FY 29. The change in the cost to SOTS reflects the conclusion at the end of FY 28 of both the durational position and the public information campaign. The SOTS-associated fringe cost will decrease to \$116,000 annually.

The potential cost to municipalities is expected to range from \$1.1

⁶ This figure assumes full implementation of RCV for the Presidential Preference Primary beginning in FY 28. This is based on the median cost (\$0.43) per registered voter from [the National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) ranked choice voting survey](#).

million⁷ and \$2.4 million⁸ in the aggregate due to the increased number of applicable elections in which RCV could be used. In FY 28, only the presidential preference primary would be eligible to see RCV utilization; more elections occur in FY 29 and beyond. The exact cost in the out years will vary by town and will depend on the number of towns that adopt RCV, as well as whether a major party adopts RCV for primaries.

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future, subject to inflation, applicable elections, and the number of municipalities and parties that adopt RCV as a result of the bill.

⁷ This is based on the median cost (\$0.43) per registered voter from [the National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) ranked choice voting survey](#).

⁸ This is based on the average (\$0.94) cost per registered voter from the [NCSL ranked choice voting survey](#).