

Department of Planning and Budget 2012 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB188S1

House of Origin	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Miller, J.C.

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Absentee voting; application by electronic mail or other electronic means.

5. Summary: Provides that the State Board of Elections shall implement a system to accept absentee ballot applications electronically and transmit ballots electronically if the voter so requests. Currently, all applicants may request, receive, and submit absentee ballot applications electronically, but only absent military and overseas citizens may request absentee ballots sent to them electronically. This bill as amended by a substitute would extend to all absentee voters the option to request ballots sent to them electronically.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 87, SB 30

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2012	0	0	
2013	\$25,000	0	General

8. Fiscal Implications: State Board of Elections (SBE) states that this substitute bill will have the greatest impact on local governments since they send out the ballots. To meet the requirements of the bill, localities would need to hand count emailed ballots when they are returned by postal mail unless new technology is acquired to enable electronic counting and scanning of the ballots. SBE indicates that one solution is to use a process known as ballot duplication where a voter marks their ballot online and prints it off. The printed ballot is marked with a barcode that contains the voter's selections. Once the completed ballot is received by the local general registrar, they will scan the barcode using a computer and a "zero-margin" printer would then print off a marked machine readable version of the ballot. This duplicated ballot would then be placed into the optical scan ballot box and would be counted.

Based on previous research completed by SBE on zero margin printers, the agency has determined that these printers can range in price from \$2,500 - \$100,000, depending on the features. SBE estimates that the printers, scanners, software, and training could cost each locality approximately \$12,500. However, SBE indicates the exact cost is indeterminate at this time because localities use many different voting equipment systems. Therefore, there will not

necessarily be a single zero-margin printer and software solution that meets every locality's needs. Assuming a cost of \$12,500 per locality, the statewide cost would be \$1,675,000. (\$12,500 * 134 localities).

With respect to the SBE, the agency indicates that there will be some changes that are necessary for the statewide voter registration system to ensure that ballots are not duplicated more than once and to assist in the tracking of the ballots for reporting. Also, the ballot delivery solution already in place will require some minor changes and possibly some additional bandwidth to account for the higher volume usage that this amendment calls for. Finally, the cost for training and configuration at the state level is estimated to be \$25,000. All are one-time costs. SBE indicates that it cannot absorb the \$25,000 cost.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: SBE and local general registrars.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No

11. Other Comments: N/A

Date: 2/1/2012