

Department of Planning and Budget

2015 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1397

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed
Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: McDougale

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Elections; run-off elections.

5. Summary: Provides that no candidate shall be deemed to have been elected at a general election to any statewide office or to the United States Senate unless such candidate receives more than 50 percent of the total votes cast for that office. The bill requires that when no candidate for an office receives more than 50 percent of the total votes cast at the general election for that office, a run-off election between the candidates receiving the highest and next-highest number of votes for that office shall be held. However, no run-off election shall be held if the total number of write-in votes cast for an office and the total number of votes cast for the candidate receiving the highest number of votes for an office together equal more than 50 percent of the total votes cast for that office. The bill requires run-off elections to be held on the fourth Tuesday following the date of the certification of the results of the general election or, if a recount is conducted after the general election, on the fourth Tuesday following the date of the certification of the results of the recount, unless the fourth Tuesday falls on a legal holiday, in which case the run-off election will be held on the sixth Tuesday. The bill provides that all other elections, including a general election of electors for the President and Vice-President of the United States, the person having the highest number of votes for an office shall be deemed to have been elected to such office and shall receive the certificate of election. Under current law, except in the case of a recount, the person having the most votes cast at any election shall be deemed to have been elected to that office.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes – Item 83.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Preliminary – see Item 8.

Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2015	\$0	0.00	-
2016	\$60,000	0.00	General
2017	\$0	0.00	-
2018	\$0	0.00	-
2019	\$0	0.00	-
2020	\$0	0.00	-
2021	\$0	0.00	-

- 8. Fiscal Implications:** The provisions of this bill would create a potential for a run-off election with each U.S. Senate election and with each statewide election; however, the Department of Elections (ELECT) is unable to properly predict when a run-off would be required, as the triggering circumstances are entirely based on election day results.

The following estimated costs would be incurred by ELECT whenever such run-off election is triggered:

1. ELECT would need to create an extensive outreach campaign to ensure that voters are fully aware of the change. The cost of the outreach campaign is similar to that needed to publicize a constitutional amendment, which was \$131,158 in 2014. This amount would be spent in FY 2017.
2. ELECT would need to make technological changes within the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS) and in other electronic processing systems (i.e. candidate finance system). The mid-level changes to VERIS would cost roughly \$30,000. The cost to update other systems would aggregate \$30,000 as well. Therefore, the total cost for technological system changes would be around \$60,000, and it would be assessed in FY 2016.
3. ELECT's cost for a statewide election in 2014 was approximately \$110,350. The cost of conducting a statewide election roughly increases by 2% each year. This amount, which would be spent each time a run-off election was held, includes mailing of absentee ballots, reimbursements to localities, and the printing of various forms and materials. The cost for FY 2017 would be \$117,104, for FY 2018 would be \$119,446, and for FY 2020 would be \$124,272.
4. ELECT may be required to hire temporary personnel to assist with conducting the run-off election, as the time period when a run-off would be held is currently devoted to preparation for the upcoming General Assembly Session.

- 9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Department of Elections; electoral boards; general registrars; and localities.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: This legislation is similar to Senate Bill 742 (Carrico), House Bill 1362 (Lingamfelter), and House Bill 1425 (Marshall, D.W.).

c: Secretary of Administration