

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2019 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB1794

Patron: VanValkenburg

Date: 1/17/2019

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Elections; early voting. Allows any registered voter to vote early in any election in which he is qualified to vote without providing a reason or making prior application for an absentee ballot. The bill requires that early voting be available beginning the fifteenth day prior to any general election, the seventh day prior to any special election held on a date other than the date of a general election, and the seventh day prior to any primary election and ending at 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately preceding the election. The bill further requires early voting to be available during regular business hours each weekday during the applicable period, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on each Saturday during the applicable period, and from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on each Sunday during the applicable period. The bill removes the current provisions for voting absentee in person but retains those provisions for voting an absentee ballot by mail, including the application requirement and the list of statutory reasons that allow a registered voter to vote absentee by mail.

Please note that SB1206 is a companion of this bill.

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**Executive Summary:**

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$141,530.00. Localities indicated that the bill would require additional staff, and additional costs related to supplies, advertising, and building leases. Localities also indicated that the estimated costs could be higher for non-Presidential elections, and their estimate does not include the costs for Primary Elections. One locality indicated that there would be costs but difficult to quantify. Other localities indicated that the bill would not have any fiscal impact as they are not responsible for voting.

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**Local Analysis:**

**Locality:** City of Danville

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$4,000.00

Early voting before an election would impact staffing costs with four required Saturdays and four required Sundays opening during the voting period. Additional \$4,000 each election. This would be maintaining just the current office with no additional locations for early voting.

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Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$25,000.00

This is an average estimate. The costs could be lower for a primary but could exceed this in a Presidential election year. In addition, a larger facility would need to be found from what we are currently using. We would highly encourage the state to provide the additional funding if approved.

Locality: City of Norfolk

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

It is estimated that this bill will adjust some procedures and processes for the Norfolk's Elections Department during elections. The fiscal impact is unknown, but most likely to increase costs. It is difficult to assess as initial changes may see a cost increase, but as the department becomes more efficient with the process costs could decline.

Locality: City of Virginia Beach

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$141,530.00

The cost cited above is the estimated total cost for the 2019 general elections should this law pass. Virginia Beach estimates that six satellite sites would be required to satisfy the levels of voting envisioned within this bill.

This estimate includes the following costs: An additional Full-time staff member (\$52,089); Additional contracted manpower (\$22,266); election officials for six satellite sites (\$40,768); supplies and advertising (\$25,407); and building leases (\$1,000).

In an non-Presidential even years, such as the recently concluded 2018 election, the cost estimated by Virginia Beach would be \$230,418. This is because the amount of sites would have to increase to ten based on the increased volume of voters.

Please note this costs are only for the General Election because primaries are not mandatory in the Commonwealth of Virginia. However, as we anticipate that both major political parties would select the option of a primary rather than a convention, the estimated yearly fiscal impact would likely be double the costs provided throughout this section.

Locality: Town of Blacksburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The Town does not have responsibility for voting. It is done by the County.

Locality: Town of Luray

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

No fiscal impact on the Town, as elections are managed by Page County.