

Department of Planning and Budget

2019 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1026-S1

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

2. Patron: Spruill

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Absentee voting; no-excuse, in-person, beginning on second Saturday immediately preceding election.

5. Summary: Allows for any registered voter to vote by absentee ballot in person beginning on the second Saturday immediately preceding any election in which he is qualified to vote without providing a reason or making prior application for an absentee ballot. The bill makes absentee voting in person available beginning on the forty-fifth day prior to the election and ending at 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately preceding the election. The bill retains the current provisions for voting an absentee ballot by mail or in person prior to the second Saturday immediately preceding the election, including the application requirement and the list of statutory reasons for absentee voting. The provisions of the bill shall apply to elections beginning with the general election on November 3, 2020.

The State Board of Elections shall submit a report by December 1, 2019, to the Governor, the General Assembly, and the House and Senate Committees on Privileges and Elections on the procedures and instructions promulgated for conducting absentee voting pursuant to the bill. The report shall include recommendations to be considered by the General Assembly for any further legislation that may be necessary to implement the bill's provisions.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: As stand-alone legislation, the Department of Elections considers implementation of this bill as "routine," and does not require additional funding. However, the agency will review all electoral legislation likely to be enacted prior to the passage by each house. If the aggregate number of "routine" bills likely to pass either house is unusually large, it is possible the agency will require additional resources. If so, the Department of Elections will identify the costs at that time.

This bill would require an update to the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS) to establish a new reason code (category) to identify voters who vote in-person beginning on the second Saturday immediately preceding an election. Under current law, voters must qualify under one of the current list of statutory reasons to vote by absentee ballot, which would remain applicable for those voting absentee by mail or in person prior to

the second Saturday preceding an election. The agency would also have to update absentee forms, reports, and other VERIS functionality to accommodate the new reason code. The Department of Elections estimates the cost of these updates to be \$8,814: \$2,500 for changes to VERIS; \$2,200 for changes to forms, web materials, and guidance documents; and \$4,114 to print and distribute new forms.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Virginia Department of Elections, State Board of Elections, and localities.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: This bill is similar to HB 2790.