

Department of Planning and Budget 2019 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1564

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

2. Patron: Lewis

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: State Board of Elections; regulations for reviewing and processing candidate petitions.

5. Summary: Directs the State Board of Elections to revise its regulations for reviewing and processing candidate petitions. The regulations are required to include standards and methods for checking signatures on candidate petitions and comparing information contained in candidate petitions. The bill requires the State Board to promulgate these regulations on or before January 1, 2020.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes – Item 83

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: See Item 8.

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2019	-	-
2020	\$18,720	General Fund
2021	\$18,720	General Fund
2022	\$18,720	General Fund
2023	\$18,720	General Fund
2024	\$18,720	General Fund
2025	\$18,720	General Fund

8. Fiscal Implications: The bill requires revisions to regulations for the review and processing of candidate petitions, including standards and methods for checking petition signatures to include the use of voter registration records in order to confirm the validity of signatures and information contained in candidate petitions.

According to the Department of Elections (ELECT), local general registrars are currently responsible for verifying the majority of candidate petitions; however, ELECT is responsible for verifying petitions if petitions for independent candidates are submitted to the agency. Currently, ELECT's verification process includes confirming if the person signing a petition is a registered voter who is eligible to vote for that particular office and does not specifically check the signature against the signature in the Virginia Election and Registration

Information System (VERIS) and notes that in many cases there is no signature in VERIS to check against.

In the past, ELECT has had to hire five contractors working 40 hours per week for 13 weeks at approximately \$18 per hour to verify candidate petitions during a given year. According to ELECT, the additional signature verification requirements in the bill are expected to increase the time needed to verify petitions by an average of approximately 40 percent compared to the current process. Therefore, ELECT estimates additional annual costs of approximately \$18,720 to hire two additional contractors working 40 hours per week for 13 weeks at \$18 per hour, assuming an average 40 percent increase in the time needed to verify each petition given its historic workload and existing contractor rates. If the revised review requirements are implemented by January 1, 2020, as required by the bill, ELECT reports the full annual impact would be expected in fiscal year 2020, as contractors are used during the spring prior to fiscal year end.

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: None.