

**Commission on Local Government**

**Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact**

2020 General Assembly Session

**Bill:** HB1421

**Patron:** Carter (by request)

**Date:** 1/30/2020

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:**

Pollbooks; requirement for printed copies of pollbooks. Requires general registrars to produce and distribute printed copies of pollbooks to each precinct for any primary and general election. The bill also contains technical adjustments to reflect the current administrative responsibilities of the Department of Elections.

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**Executive Summary:**

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$6,000.00. Some localities responded with a cost, noting that the cost would be related to printing and binding of pollbooks with count form, additional staff time, and training of all election officers on a new process. Of those localities that responded with no cost, it was noted that they are already in compliance with the provisions of the bill or they are towns and not responsible for voting registrar duties. Localities also noted that using pollbooks in case of a power outage or if electronic pollbooks are out of service could create confusion whether a voter had already been checked in on the electronic pollbook or not, and noted that the current state law mandates the use of provisional ballots for all voters in a situation wherein the pollbook is not functional.

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**Local Analysis:**

**Locality:** City of Harrisonburg

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$1,500.00

The city estimates the fiscal impact of this legislation to be \$1,500.

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**Locality:** City of Roanoke

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$300.00

Per discussion with the Registrar for the City of Roanoke, paper pollbooks could only be used if a pollbook failure occurred at the beginning of the day. For instance, if electronic pollbook failure occurred one hour after the polls were open, the paper pollbooks would not reflect which voters had already voted. There would be no value in using paper pollbooks at that point. State law currently mandates the use of provisional ballots for all voters in a situation wherein the pollbook is not functional.

Printing and staff costs would be approximately \$300. The bigger impact would be in training all election officers in what would be a completely new process. This would likely require separate classes for all election officers.

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**Locality:** City of Virginia Beach

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$6,000.00

This is an estimate per election. The cost of printing and binding each pollbook and count form for all of Virginia Beach's 100 precincts would be about \$6,000 per election.

**Locality:** City of Winchester

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

HB 1421 - \$0. Requires general registrars to produce and distribute printed copies of poll books to each precinct for any primary and general election. Printing the voter on list on paper will not cost Winchester any more than we already pay in additional printing costs for an election because we already do this, for use in “voter look-ups” but not for voter check-in. (There would be no way to know if a voter had already been checked in on the electronic poll book if it were out of service.) The Legislative Committee of our association is consulting with the commissioner of elections on this because it's unclear what the goal of this bill is. If the goal is to have a back-up poll book for use if the electronic poll books cease to operate – other methods are being considered (additional laptops prepared to be deployed as poll books, alternate power sources, etc.) Switching to paper mid-day requires the use of provisional ballots, so other costs come into play. Makes more sense to explore other back up options to the electronic poll book system.

**Locality:** Prince Edward County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$1,240.00

I anticipate this requirement will cost \$310 per election/primary. With an average of 4 such events each year the annual cost will be \$1,240 mainly for paper and ink

**Locality:** Town of Ashland

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$3,000.00

Assume the Town would only cover the expense for biannual Town Council elections.

**Locality:** Town of Blacksburg

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

The Town does not have responsibility for voting registrar.

**Locality:** Town of Marion.

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

County function; no anticipated financial impact on town

**Locality:** Town of Scottsville

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

The bill would have no direct cost to small towns. Small towns contract with county voter registrars to run their elections, generally on a flat fee. This bill might require additional printing or staffing costs of county voter registrars, but the pass-through cost to small towns is indirect and likely minimal.

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**Locality:** Wise County

**Estimated Fiscal Impact:** \$0.00

Wise County already complies with the language in this bill.

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