

Department of Planning and Budget 2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1444

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/>	In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled

2. Patron: Ware

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Elections; voter identification containing a photograph required; availability of absentee voting.

5. Summary: Requires presentation of a form of identification containing a photograph in order to vote. A voter who does not show an accepted form of identification is entitled to cast a provisional ballot. The bill limits the period that absentee voting in person is available to the seven days prior to an election and allows localities to offer extended hours for absentee voting in person. Additionally, the bill repeals the provision that allows an absentee ballot that is returned after the close of polls to be counted if it is postmarked by election day and arrives by the Friday after the election. The bill makes changes to the processing of returned absentee ballots and repeals the permanent absentee voter list.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes; Item 89.

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

8. Fiscal Implications: This bill would require the Department of Elections (ELECT) to provide free photo identification cards to voters who do not have one of the forms of identification required for voting purposes as specified in subsection B of § 24.2-643, Code of Virginia. ELECT is required to provide to each general register the equipment that would be used to obtain photographs and signatures that would be submitted to the department to create identification cards. ELECT estimates the cost of each set of camera and signature capture pad equipment to be approximately \$704 based on the retail cost of the equipment.

The bill allows the agency to contract out the production and distribution of the voter identification cards and ELECT currently estimates the retail cost to produce the identification cards to be \$7.95 per unit. While these retail costs are the best available estimates at this time, ELECT anticipates actual costs once bid out will likely be less.

The initial estimated one-time cost to purchase camera and signature pad equipment for all localities using the above cost assumptions is \$93,632. The number of localities that may still possess working equipment provided for previous photo identification requirements is unknown and the actual number of localities in need of such equipment may be less. Ongoing

annual costs to produce identification cards for an estimated 2,000 voters is \$15,900. In addition to the card production, ongoing costs are expected to replace an estimated five percent of equipment annually. Assuming a replacement rate of 7 units per year, approximately five percent, ongoing equipment replacement costs would be \$4,928. This brings total estimated general fund costs to \$109,532 in fiscal year 2024 and \$20,828 in ongoing annual costs thereafter.

The bill eliminates the ability for voters without acceptable forms of identification to vote after signing a statement, subject to Class 5 felony penalties for false statements pursuant to § 24.2-1016, Code of Virginia, that they are the named registered voters they claim to be. These provisions were initially provided by Chapter 1065 and 1064 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly. At that time, the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission estimated a fiscal impact of \$0 for periods of imprisonment in state adult correctional facilities. While any estimate of the impact of eliminating this provision cannot be determined, any decrease in the prison or jail population would reduce costs to the state. The Commonwealth currently pays the localities \$15.00 a day for each state-responsible prisoner held in a jail.

The proposed legislation is not expected to have a fiscal impact on the Department of Motor Vehicles.

- 9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Virginia Department of Elections, State Board of Elections, Department of Motor Vehicles, and localities (General Registrars and Electoral Boards).

- 10. Technical Amendment Necessary:** No.

- 11. Other Comments:** This bill is similar, but not identical, to HB1467.