

Department of Planning and Budget 2013 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB702

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

2. Patron: Howell

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Absentee voting; persons eligible to vote by absentee ballot.

5. Summary: Provides that qualified voters may vote absentee in person without providing an excuse or reason for not being able to vote in person on Election Day. The bill retains the present statutory list of specific reasons entitling a voter to cast an absentee ballot for those persons who vote absentee by mail.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes. Item 87

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Indeterminate

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Positions</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2014	\$80,000	0	GF

8. Fiscal Implications: SBE reports that the primary indeterminate fiscal impact of this legislation would be to the localities since they administer absentee voting, providing staff and facilities for in person absentee voting. A large urban locality has estimated the start up cost of expanded in person absentee voting for the general registrar office at \$1.00 per voter, and a daily added cost of \$.37 per voter; providing satellite locations would add further costs, estimated in the table below for 11,500 in person absentee voters:

CATEGORY	REGISTRAR'S OFFICE	PER ADDITIONAL SITES ³
Personnel (23 additional) ¹	\$2,600	\$500
Traffic Control (3 officers)	\$1,500	\$1,500
Portable Toilet	\$100	0
TOTAL DAILY COST	\$4,200.00	\$2,000.00
Computers, etc. (4 + printer)	\$6,500	\$6,500
Extra Ballots (20,000) ²	\$5,000	\$2,500
Voting Equipment & related		\$20,000
ONE TIME COSTS	\$11,500.00	\$29,000.00

¹ Assign 4 additional workers to sites with others from original 23 at Registrar's office.

² Additional 20,000 ballots for office with additional 10,000 for satellite site – could increase depending on number of ballot styles

³ Assumes a government building at no rental cost.

Another urban registrar in 2008 estimated an added cost of \$15,000 to staff one site for early voting for the 45 days before a general election, assuming a no cost government building is available. A 1992 Election Assistance Commission Study cites Fairfax County as reporting a \$2,500 per satellite cost. This study reports variable costs for early voting nationwide, with Texas counties reporting per early voter costs ranging from \$.14 to \$3.60 and one county reporting a higher per voter cost for mail (\$2.74) than in person (\$.78) voting.

General registrars participating in a SBE sponsored workgroup believe that expanded in person absentee voting will have a significant cost impact locally.

For the State Board of Elections (SBE), implementing this bill will require the agency to: (1) revise the Virginia state absentee ballot application form, instructions, voter education and guidance documents, and (2) modify the statewide election management system (VERIS). SBE estimates the current first year cost of implementing this legislation at \$80,000 for a major VERIS change. In 2011, the actual fiscal impact of implementation costs to SBE for similar legislation was \$45,000. SBE estimates that the current cost will be higher because these kinds of changes affecting VERIS absentee functions must be classified as major changes which cost \$80,000. These costs reflect the increased complexity of federal and state laws surrounding absentee voting.

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

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: n/a

11. Other Comments: none

Date: 1/11/13

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