

Department of Planning and Budget 2015 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1518

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

2. Patron: Landes

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Primary elections; voter registration by political party.

5. Summary: Adds party affiliation to the information that an applicant is asked to provide when registering to vote. The applicant may indicate that he is an independent. Voters registered prior to January 1, 2016, will be designated as independent unless they provide a political party designation in writing to the general registrar. Voters may change their party affiliation or independent status by written notice at any time before the registration records are closed prior to an election. The state party chairman of each political party must notify the State Board of Elections by January 31 of each year of the rules adopted by the duly constituted authorities of the state political party governing who may participate in the party's primaries held from April 1 of that year through March 31 of the following year.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, Item 83

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates:

7a. Expenditure Impact:

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Fund</i>
2016	\$137,814	General
2017	\$20,000	General
2018	\$20,000	General
2019	\$20,000	General
2020	\$20,000	General
2021	\$20,000	General

8. Fiscal Implications: The Department of Elections (ELECT) indicates that there are several implementation and ongoing costs of providing a party affiliation option for voter registration. First, significant modifications to Virginia's statewide voter registration system (VERIS) will need to be made to allow voters to indicate a political party affiliation and to edit the election management program as political parties would be given the option of having a closed or open primary. The estimated cost for these modifications is approximately \$80,000 for fiscal year 2016. ELECT estimates that approximately \$25,000 will be needed to develop pollbook production processes that will account for party registration, \$6,500 to change the statewide voter registration database and online application, \$2,200 for modifying existing forms, guidance documents, and voter education, and \$4,114 for printing and

distribution of forms. Additionally, ELECT indicates this legislation may lead to a higher volume of new or updated voter registration cards, which would increase the agency's annual cost of providing card stock to localities. The agency is responsible for purchasing and mailing localities the paper stock on which voter registration cards are printed. ELECT can provide enough card stock for 66,667 voter registration cards for \$20,000. ELECT estimates that this may be the minimum amount of card stock needed but if requests for new voter registration cards increase significantly, additional resources may be required. HB2062 would remove the requirement that ELECT must provide card stock to localities, which would remove the estimated \$20,000 annual fiscal impact.

Localities will also have a recurring cost for mailings to voters opting to indicate or change the party affiliation in their voter record. Estimates for the costs of printing and mailing are approximately \$600,000 in FY2016 and FY2017. ELECT indicates that there may be some cost savings with this legislation. ELECT's new online voter registration portal allows voters to communicate changes and opt out of receiving a new voter card by mail. Additionally, the remaining localities using paper pollbooks will have fewer pages under more restrictive primaries. Also, party registration could result in parties not opting for pledge requirements permitted for presidential primaries under § 24.2-545, a separate cost. The volume of applications printed, distributed and received by ELECT and the registrars, is expected to be much greater in the first years of implementation.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Elections, all localities

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: None.

11. Other Comments: This bill is similar to SB1060 and HB1599.

C: Secretary of Administration

Date: January 27, 2015

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