

Department of Planning and Budget 2016 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1121

House of Origin ☒ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed

Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☐ Enrolled

2. Patron: Anderson

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Absentee voting; signature requirement; verification of signatures by officers of elections.

5. Summary: Requires the officers of elections to compare the signature on an absentee ballot envelope with the signature on that voter's voter registration application. Three officers, including one representative of each political party, are required to agree that the signatures match in order for the absentee ballot to be accepted. If less than three agree, the ballot is given provisional status and the electoral board makes the final determination of its validity. Notice by certified mail is required to be given to the voter. The bill also requires absentee ballot applications to be signed by the applicant's own handwriting or by electronic means, if such electronic signature is created by using a cursor, stylus, or similar device moved by the applicant to capture his signature. Any application signed by any other means shall be rejected.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

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

8. Fiscal Implications: According to the Department of Elections, the agency may incur costs for providing additional absentee ballot provisional envelopes, at cost of \$0.26 per envelope, development of an absentee ballot application form, and training on the new absentee voting procedures. Any costs that may be incurred are expected to be absorbed by the agency.

Localities may also incur increased costs for additional staff to pre-process ballots in the general registrar's offices before election day and to compile and redact the voter registration applications needed for signature comparison. Localities would also be responsible for the increase in mailing costs at \$3.45 each for certified mail and for holding an additional electoral board meeting to rule on signature issues.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Elections, general registrars, electoral boards, and localities.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.