

Department of Planning and Budget 2017 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB2068

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: Watts

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Absentee voting; eligibility of persons with disabilities and persons age 65 or older.

5. Summary: Entitles (i) persons with disabilities who are not reasonably able to go in person to the polls on election day and (ii) persons who will be age 65 or older on the date of the election to vote absentee. Current law allows persons with disabilities who are unable to go in person to the polls on election day to vote absentee. The bill does not change current law that entitles persons age 65 or older and persons with disabilities to vote outside of the polling place upon request.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

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

8. Fiscal Implications: This bill would require an update to the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS) to establish a new reason code (category) to identify that voters 65 years or older are eligible to vote absentee. The agency would also have to update absentee forms, reports, and other VERIS functionality to accommodate the new reason code. The Department of Elections estimates the cost of these updates to be \$8,814: \$2,500 for changes to VERIS; \$2,200 for changes to forms, web materials, and guidance documents; and \$4,114 to print and distribute new forms.

This legislation changes the absentee voting standard for persons with disabilities. Currently, persons with disabilities who are unable to go in person to the polls on election day are eligible to vote absentee. This bill would modify that provision to allow persons with disabilities who are not reasonably able to go to the polls on election day to vote absentee. It is expected that any required VERIS or form updates could occur at the same time as the updates related to allowing voters 65 years or older to vote absentee.

As stand-alone legislation, the Department of Elections considers implementation of this bill as “routine,” and does not require additional funding. The Department of Elections will review all electoral legislation likely to be enacted prior to the passage by each house. If the aggregate number of “routine” bills likely to pass either house is unusually large, it is possible that the Department of Elections will require additional resources. If so, the Department of Elections will identify the costs at that time.

Localities may also experience an increase in the total cost of processing the absentee ballots at the local registrar's office, such as increased staff time needed to process in person applicants and to review and issue ballots in response to applications submitted other than in person.

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

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: January 16, 2017
File: HB2068