Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2018 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB1072 **Patron:** Heretick **Date:** 1/24/2018

In accordance with the provisions of §30-19.03 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

Bill Summary:

Allows for any registered voter to vote by absentee ballot in any election in which he is qualified to vote. The bill removes the current list of statutory reasons for which a person may be entitled to vote by absentee ballot and consolidates multiple sections relating to absentee voting by uniformed and overseas voters into one section and multiple sections related to absentee voting by persons with a disability into one section.

*** Please note this bill is identical to HB57 (Herring) and SB114 (Locke).

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Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from $1.00 - $238,800.00. Localities indicated that the bill would impact their annual budget as it requires additional staff, and additional costs related to preparing & mailing additional ballots. Localities also noted that the bill could multiply the volume of absentee voters, which could lead to additional costs to accommodate increased foot traffic in offsite voting locations.

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Local Analysis:

Locality: City of Danville **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $27,000.00

HB 57 would have a significant impact on the budget for the Danville Registrar's Office. The estimated fiscal impact is based on turnout for a presidential election and includes the cost estimate for additional postage, envelopes and printing (approximately $20,000) and additional staffing to handle volume ($7,000).

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Locality: City of Harrisonburg **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $5,000.00

Fiscal impact is per election. This would require full staffing for 45 days prior to an election . This would greatly increase mailing expenses and staff time preparing mailings. It would also require additional staff in the office..

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Locality: City of Roanoke **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $12,000.00

Section § 24.2-702.2 of this bill expands the use of the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot for all elections (not just federal elections). This could have other consequences for state and local elections since most voters using this form live abroad. This bill "tinkers" with a number of other voting provisions such as counting of ballots received after the deadline (Election Day), amending of abstracts, etc. Additional expenses for the "no excuse" portion of this bill are conservatively estimated to be approximately $6,000 per election. Expenses for mailed ballots would increase, but it is difficult to predict the additional volume of mailed ballots that might be incurred.

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Locality: City of Winchester **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $15,000.00

HBs 57, 74, 733, and 835 all provide for some loosening on the limits ("no excuse") of absentee voting – or the creation of "Early Voting" -- Some would require hours on Saturdays (beyond the 2 Saturdays prior to E-Day that we already work) and at least one of these bills allow for voting hours on some Sundays. All would require an increase in staff and staff hours, and office space. We would be looking at maybe at 2 more seasonal hourly assistant registrars – working about 4 or 5 pay periods prior to Election Day. This would be due to our having to "be open for business" for an increase in in-person voting, while at the same time juggling the normal "close of books" prior to E-Day and the extremely busy time of election prep.

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Locality: County of Henrico **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $238,800.00

This bill would multiply the number of absentee voters to potentially 50% of the County's population. The current facility cannot accommodate that level of foot traffic. Satellite voting locations would need to be set up at recreation centers and libraries. An offsite location would cost $8,000 for a voting machine, $4,000 for a network line, computers and printers, $1,000 for ballot storage, and $10/hour for 6 poll workers running about 8 hours a day for 21 days ($10,080). This totals to $23,080 per satellite location. There would need to be 2 locations in each of the 5 districts. The cost of 10 locations totals to $230,800.

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Locality: Fairfax County **Estimated Fiscal Impact:** $1.00

The fiscal impact is negligible, limited to revising forms that are printed in the ordinary course of business. The change would be administratively simple and voters' processes would be streamlined. The change would accommodate the rare voter who might not qualify under the current absentee reasons.

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