

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2018 General Assembly Session

Bill: HB74

Patron: Sullivan, Jr.

Date: 1/29/2018

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 any registered voter to vote early in any election in which he is qualified to vote without providing a reason or making prior application for an absentee ballot. The bill requires that early voting be available beginning the twenty-first day prior to any general election, the seventh day prior to any special election held on a date other than the date of a general election, and the seventh day prior to any primary election and ending at 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately preceding the election. The bill further requires early voting to be available during regular business hours each weekday during the applicable period, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on each Saturday during the applicable period, and from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on each Sunday during the applicable period. The bill removes the current provisions for voting absentee in person but retains those provisions for voting an absentee ballot by mail, including the application requirement and the list of statutory reasons that allow a registered voter to vote absentee by mail.

Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$230,800.00. Localities indicated that the bill would require additional staff, and additional costs related to equipment & mailing additional ballots. Localities also noted that the bill could increase the volume of absentee voters, which could lead to additional costs to accommodate additional voters in both onsite, and offsite voting locations.

Local Analysis:

Locality: City of Danville

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$6,000.00

This fiscal impact is based on the additional staffing costs - \$6,000 as required to be open 4 hours on each Sunday during early voting period. This would just be maintaining current office with no additional locations for voting.

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 with a large enough room to handle voters. It would also require additional staff in the office.

Locality: City of Roanoke

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$10,692.00

This bill would result in a tremendous increase in absentee voting. The expansion of weekend hours also would impact expenses. As written this bill would increase temp wages approximately \$4,200 and would increase overtime wages approximately \$1,146.08 for each election. Expenses for mailed ballots would increase, but it is difficult to predict the additional volume of mailed ballots that might be incurred.

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.

Locality: County of Henrico

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$230,800.00

Henrico would need satellite voting locations at recreation centers and libraries to accommodate the significantly increased foot traffic that would come from this bill. One off-site location would cost \$8,000 for a voting machine, \$4,000 for network line, computers, and printers, \$1000 for ballot storage and \$10/hr for 6 poll workers running about 8 hours a day for 21 days (\$10,080). Henrico would need to add at least two sites in each of the 5 districts. 10 sites at \$23,080 each totals to \$230,800.

Locality: Fairfax County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Minimal fiscal impact. This bill compresses early voting into a 21 day period, rather than the longer 45 day period for in-person absentee voting. There may be some savings by operating satellite voting sites for a shorter period of time, but the savings would be offset by additional election officers required to manage the larger crowd of voters attempting to vote in the 21 day time period. By compressing voting into 21 days, there is a risk of longer lines.