

Department of Planning and Budget 2019 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB2709

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

2. Patron: Sullivan

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Elections; any registered voter allowed to vote early without providing reason, etc.

5. 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 8:00 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. The provisions of the bill are applicable to elections beginning with the November general election in 2020; the bill requires the State Board of Elections to report on or before December 1, 2019, on the instructions and procedures promulgated by the State Board of Elections for conducting early voting.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: As stand-alone legislation, the Department of Elections considers implementation of this bill as “routine,” and does not require additional funding. However, the agency 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 the agency will require additional resources. If so, the Department of Elections will identify the costs at that time.

This bill would require an update to the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS) to modify an existing reason code (category) to identify voters who vote in-person starting 21 days before the election. The agency would also have to update absentee forms, reports, and other VERIS functionality to accommodate the modified 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.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Virginia Department of Elections and localities.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/21/2019