

Department of Planning and Budget

2021 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB1459

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: Norment

3. Committee: Privileges and Elections

4. Title: Conduct of elections; voter identification and absentee voting; process for applying for absentee ballots.

5. Summary: Requires presentation of a form of identification containing a photograph in order to vote. The bill eliminates current provisions permitting a voter who does not have one of the required forms of identification to vote after signing a statement, subject to felony penalties for false statements, that he is the named registered voter he claims to be. Instead, such voter would be entitled to cast a provisional ballot. The bill prohibits absentee ballots from being returned to any location that is not located in the office of the general registrar, including drop boxes located outside of such locations. The bill provides that no waiver of the absentee ballot envelope witness signature shall be permitted under any circumstances and requires absentee ballots to have, in addition to the witness signature, the witness's printed name and residence address. The bill also requires certain actions to be taken to process absentee ballots that are returned by mail before election day. The general registrar is required to examine the ballot envelopes to verify completion of the required voter affirmation; mark the pollbook, or the absentee voter applicant list if the pollbook is not available, that the voter has voted; and open the sealed ballot envelopes and insert the ballots in optical scan counting equipment or other secure ballot container without initiating any ballot count totals. Current law requires only that the general registrar undertake at least one such activity before election day. So that ballots can be separated from ballot envelopes and scanned, the bill requires that the office of the general registrar be used as a central absentee voter precinct. Absentee ballots processed at any central absentee voter precinct are required to be sorted by the precinct to which the voter who cast the absentee ballot is assigned and that the resulting vote totals from such ballots be reported separately for each voter precinct.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: See Item 8.

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.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Virginia Department of Elections, State Board of Elections, General Registrars, and localities.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/25/2021