

Commission on Local Government

Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact

2021 General Assembly Session

Bill: SB1157

Special Session:

Patron: Spruill

Date: 1/20/2021

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:

Shifting municipal elections to November. Shifts all municipal elections for city and town council and school board from May to November, beginning with elections held after January 1, 2022.

Executive Summary:

Localities have evaluated a negative fiscal impact ranging from \$0.00 - \$25,000.00. A majority of localities noted that the bill would have no fiscal impact because they are in compliance with the provisions of the bill. They also noted that the bill would have a positive fiscal impact because the bill would reduce the total number of election cycles, and increase governmental efficiency. Also the \$200,000 is the highest estimated cost saving that would come in the form of ballots, mail in, postage, worker pay, overtime, and location costs. Of those localities that responded with a cost, noted that the cost would be related to extensive advertising and marketing to ensure voters were aware of the change. One locality also noted the expenses associated with May elections are currently reimbursed.

Local Analysis:

Locality: City of Alexandria..

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The City of Alexandria does not anticipate a fiscal impact. The City already holds municipal elections in November, a change made back in 2012.

Locality: City of Harrisonburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The City already holds all municipal elections in November.

Locality: City of Manassas

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

No fiscal impact. The City of Manassas already elects its governing body and school board in November elections.

Locality: City of Norfolk

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$200,000.00

The City of Norfolk would see a savings of about \$100,000 - \$200,000 from eliminating May elections for municipal elections. With May elections cut, cost savings would come in the form of ballots, mail in, postage, worker pay, overtime, and location costs.

Locality: City of Virginia Beach

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The City of Virginia Beach shifted its elections from May to November by Council action in 2006. As such, the City does not operate councilmanic or school board elections in May; thus, this bill will not impact the City and will have no immediate fiscal cost to us. However, it should be noted that cost savings related to the consolidation of election dates was a secondary reason specified by City Council in its ordinance to shift the election date.

Locality: Fairfax County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$2,400.00

The County estimates a cost of \$2,400 for printing the ballots for one of the towns within the County's borders. The expenses associated with May elections are currently reimbursed.

Locality: Henrico County.

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

The bill as introduced has no impact on Henrico County as this is the current process.

Locality: Montgomery County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Elections were previously moved to November.

Locality: Rappahannock County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Should actually be a positive fiscal impact due to reducing the total number of election cycles.

Locality: Richmond County

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

no impact

Locality: Town of Ashland

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$5,000.00

Our Council and staff are adamantly opposed to this proposal. The Town already funds our May elections so we should be able to determine when it occurs. Shifting local elections to align with state and national elections will likely increase the negative political noise in the local elections that have nothing to do with running a town.

Locality: Town of Blacksburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Our Town shifted our elections from May to November in 2011. It was an actual savings to the Town to be combined with the County elections in November. Previously we would pay \$5,000 to \$11,000 an election.

Locality: Town of Christiansburg

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Town of Christiansburg elections are already held in November.

Locality: Town of Herndon

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

No Comment.

Locality: Town of Luray

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Luray currently has November elections

Locality: Town of Marion.

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$25,000.00

Traditionally, Town Council elections have been held in May. Moving those would place a burden upon the Town to provide extensive advertising and marketing to ensure voters were aware of the change

Locality: Town of Scottsville

Estimated Fiscal Impact: \$0.00

Zero direct cost impact for the Town of Scottsville, or for similarly situated towns.

Scottsville does currently have May elections for Town Council and would be affected by the bill. But town election administration is handled by the county registrar, with only some basic overhead costs paid by the Town. These costs for pollbooks, ballot printing, etc. would not likely change with the change in date. There is no fiscal impact at the Town level.

Professional and Other Organization Analysis:

Organization: Northern Neck PDC

Positive fiscal impact in increase in governmental efficiency and reduction of locality's cost in conducting local elections.

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