



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 550

February Session, 2016

Substitute Senate Bill No. 253

Senate, April 7, 2016

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through SEN. CASSANO, S. of the 4th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 9-438 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

3 [In] (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this
4 section, in each municipality or voting district, the polling place or
5 places for [primaries] a primary held under sections 9-382 to 9-450,
6 inclusive, shall be the same as those used for the election to be held.

7 (b) (1) The number of polling places required under subsection (a) of
8 this section may be reduced by the registrars of voters of a
9 municipality in accordance with this subsection.

10 (2) If the registrars of voters of any such municipality agree to
11 reduce the number of polling places, the registrars of voters shall, not
12 later than sixty days prior to a primary held under sections 9-382 to 9-

13 450, inclusive, designate the polling place or places for such primary.
14 Such polling place or places may be the same as or different than the
15 polling places used for the election to be held.

16 (3) Not earlier than sixty days, but not later than forty-five days,
17 prior to such primary, the registrars of voters of any such municipality
18 shall notify the Secretary of the State and the candidates seeking
19 nomination to an office in such primary of the change in the polling
20 place or places. If a candidate petitions for nomination to an office after
21 the registrars of voters have notified candidates of such change, the
22 registrars of voters shall immediately notify the petitioning candidate
23 of such change. If any candidate objects to a change in the polling place
24 or places, the candidate shall notify the Secretary of such objection not
25 later than four o'clock p.m. on the thirtieth day prior to the primary.
26 Such notification from the candidate shall be in the form of a written
27 letter, signed by the candidate, and shall be held confidential by the
28 Secretary. The Secretary shall promptly notify such registrars of voters
29 and each candidate seeking nomination to an office in such primary
30 that the Secretary has received a letter of objection. Such notification
31 shall not identify the candidate who objected. If such a candidate so
32 objects, the polling place or places shall be the same as those used for
33 the election to be held.

34 (4) Not later than twenty-five days prior to such primary, the
35 registrars of voters of any such municipality shall send notification of
36 the polling place for the primary, by mail, to each elector whose
37 polling place for the primary will be different than the elector's polling
38 place for the election. The registrars of voters shall not be required to
39 so notify an elector for any subsequent primary if the primary polling
40 place for such elector remains the same as that provided in the initial
41 notification.

42 (5) If any polling place that would otherwise be open pursuant to
43 subsection (a) of this section is closed for a primary pursuant to this
44 subsection, the registrars of voters of any such municipality shall
45 ensure that a sign is posted at such polling place providing electors

46 with information to redirect such electors to the open polling place or
47 places for the primary.

48 (6) Notwithstanding any provision of this title or title 7, any special
49 act, charter or ordinance, if the number of polling places for a primary
50 is reduced pursuant to this subsection, the number of moderators
51 required for such primary may be reduced, if the registrars of voters of
52 such municipality so agree, provided at least one certified moderator
53 serves each polling place.

54 (c) When unaffiliated electors are authorized under section 9-431 to
55 vote in the primary of [either of two parties, both] any one of multiple
56 parties, all such parties shall hold their primaries in the same room of
57 each [such] polling place. On the day of the primary, the polls shall
58 remain open for voting from six o'clock a.m. until eight o'clock p.m.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	9-438

GAE *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 17 \$	FY 18 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Savings	Less than 25,000	Less than 25,000

Explanation

The bill allows municipal registrars of voters to reduce the number of polling places during a primary. To the extent that municipalities are able to reduce the number of polling places during a primary, they will realize a savings. Municipal savings from such closures are anticipated to be less than \$25,000. The amount of savings realized by municipalities will be dependent upon the number of polling places closed and municipal costs to operate polling places.

The savings realized by municipalities would be partially offset by requirements that registrars of voters provide notification to voters affected by polling place closures.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 253*****AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill authorizes registrars of voters to reduce the number of polling places for a primary, the location of which may be the same or different than for the corresponding election. However, if any candidate objects to the reduction, the bill requires the polling places to remain the same. Current law requires that towns use the same polling places for a primary as they use for the election.

If registrars reduce the number of primary polling places under the bill, they may similarly agree to reduce the number of moderators, provided there is at least one certified moderator per polling place. They must also ensure that a sign is posted at a closed primary polling place providing electors with information directing them to the correct polling place.

The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY POLLING PLACE REDUCTION

The bill establishes procedures and a timeframe for reducing the number of primary polling places. Specifically:

1. at least 60 days before every primary, registrars of voters must designate the polling place or places, which may be fewer in number than will be used at the upcoming election;
2. between 45 and 60 days before the primary, registrars must notify the secretary of the state and candidates of any change in polling places;

3. registrars must immediately notify any petitioning candidate of the change if he or she becomes eligible for ballot access after other candidates have received the notification;
4. by 4:00 p.m. on the 30th day before the primary, a candidate who objects to the change must notify the secretary of the state in writing (the secretary must keep the objection confidential);
5. the secretary must promptly notify the registrars and all other candidates in the primary of the objection, in which case the polling places remain the same as for the corresponding election; and
6. if there is no objection, no later than 25 days before the primary, the registrars must notify by mail each elector whose polling place has changed.

If a primary polling place changes and the affected electors receive notification, the registrars of voters do not have to notify the electors for any subsequent primary as long as the polling location remains the same.

Lastly, the bill specifies that if more than one political party's state rules authorize unaffiliated electors to vote in their primaries, the primaries must be held in the same room of the polling place. Current Republican and Democratic state party rules do not allow unaffiliated electors to participate in their primaries.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 13 Nay 2 (03/18/2016)