

# OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

sHB-7160

AN ACT INCREASING VOTER ACCESS.

## **OFA Fiscal Note**

### **State Impact:**

| Agency Affected        | Fund-Effect | FY 20 \$         | FY 21 \$     |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------|
| Secretary of the State | GF - Cost   | Up to<br>152,500 | Up to 30,000 |
| Various State Agencies | GF - Cost   | 2,500            | None         |

Note: GF=General Fund

### **Municipal Impact:**

| Municipalities         | Effect                                  | FY 20 \$  | FY 21 \$  |
|------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| Various Municipalities | STATE<br>MANDATE <sup>1</sup><br>- Cost | See Below | See Below |

### **Explanation**

The bill makes various unrelated changes affecting elections, including Election Day Registration (EDR), special elections, voter registration, and state and local redistricting data.

**Section 1** requires that by January 1, 2020, specified education officials, in consultation with the Secretary of the State (SOS), develop standards for awarding academic credit to high school or college student who volunteer in connection with elections or primaries.

There is no cost to the State Department of Education, local and regional boards of education, or the higher education constituent units

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<sup>1</sup> State mandate is defined in Sec. 2-32b(2) of the Connecticut General Statutes, "state mandate" means any state initiated constitutional, statutory or executive action that requires a local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenues.

to develop standards for awarding academic credit to any high school or college student for the performance of volunteer service in the preparation for and conduct of any election or primary, as they have the staff and expertise necessary to do so.

**Section 2** designates Election Day as a legal state holiday and eliminates the designation of Lincoln's Birthday as a legal state holiday. The bill also renames Washington's Birthday to be known as Presidents' Day. No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of this provision as there would be a cost shift from one non-premium holiday<sup>2</sup> to another.

**Section 3** allows individuals who are in line at an EDR location by 8:00 p.m. to vote after completing the voter registration process and being admitted as an elector. Allowing EDR individuals in line by 8:00 p.m. to register to vote, as well as vote, may result in potential minimal costs to certain municipalities. Potential costs would depend on how many individuals are in line and available staffing levels.

**Section 4** allows registrars of voters to apply to the SOS to designate additional EDR locations. To the extent municipalities need to designate an additional EDR location, there would be potential costs associated with, but not limited to, providing a polling location, hiring and training additional EDR staff, purchasing additional equipment, and hiring police.

**Sections 5 through 8** lift the prohibition on holding a special election on a weekend for certain vacancies and allow the Governor to deliver writs of election electronically for certain vacancies.

To the extent a special election is held on a weekend, there would be potential costs to certain municipalities. Potential costs would depend on available staffing levels and how many individuals vote on such day. There may be certain increased costs to holding a special election on a weekend. For example, hiring police and poll workers, renting a

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<sup>2</sup> Premium state holidays are New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

polling location, and renting equipment.

**Sections 9 through 14** allows the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), voter registration agencies, and requires public high education institutions to use an SOS approved electronic system when registering qualified voter registration applicants as electors. Such system must comply with the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requirements.

Pursuant to a May 16, 2016, memorandum of understanding between the SOS and DMV there is already an established process and timeline for developing an automatic voter registration system. Thus, these provisions have no fiscal impact to DMV.

In order to develop an electronic system, it is anticipated the SOS will have to hire a consultant at a cost of up to \$150,000 in FY 20. The costs would be associated with the consultant modifying the existing online voter registration system to include the ability for applications to sign using a signature pad and to set up signature kiosks at such agencies. A cost of up to \$30,000 is anticipated in FY 21 in order to maintain the software of such application. In addition, each voter registration agency will need a kiosk set up which can accept electronic signatures from applicants at a cost of \$2,500 in FY 20 to each such agency.

The bill also requires SOS to develop and implement a system through which individuals may submit electronic signatures in order to sign elections-related forms and applications, other than those from campaign finance purposes.

It is anticipated SOS will need to purchase software for developing forms that can be electronically signed at a cost of up to \$2,500 in FY 20. It is unclear how the electronic signature will be implemented once developed and potential costs may be incurred in FY 21 for each form signed.

**Section 15** creates a process for the Office of Policy and

Management (OPM) and Department of Corrections (DOC) to adjust U.S. Census population data to count inmates at their addresses prior to incarceration instead of the prison address. The adjusted data must be the basis for determining General Assembly districts. This has no fiscal impact as it is anticipated that OPM and DOC have the expertise make these adjustments with existing resources.

### ***The Out Years***

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the cost of maintaining the electronic voter registration system, the number of forms electronically signed, special elections held on a weekend, and the establishment of additional EDR locations, EDR individuals, and staffing levels.