SB-901

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency Affected</th>
<th>Fund-Effect</th>
<th>FY 22 $</th>
<th>FY 23 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources of the General Fund</td>
<td>GF - Potential Revenue Gain</td>
<td>Less than $5,000</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of the State</td>
<td>GF - Cost</td>
<td>Approximately 100,000</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>FY 22 $</th>
<th>FY 23 $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Various Municipalities</td>
<td>STATE MANDATE(^1) - Potential Cost</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Explanation**

**Section 1** expands the reasons for which an elector may vote by absentee ballot for any election, primary, or referendum occurring before July 1, 2021 to include the sickness of COVID-19. It is anticipated there will be an increase in absentee ballot applications as a result of this provision.

\(^1\) 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.
Sections 2 and 3 require the absentee ballot inner envelope statement be updated to include "the sickness of COVID-19" and allow SOS to make changes to absentee voting forms and materials. No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of such modifications.

The bill also expands violations that constitute a false statement which results in a potential minimal revenue gain of less than $5,000 in FY 21. In FY 19 there was one violation of false statement by absentee voting, which resulted in no fines collected.

Section 4 authorizes SOS to approve and select a third-party vendor for town clerks' use in mailing absentee voting sets for elections prior to July 1, 2021. It is anticipated that the use of such a vendor will cost approximately $100,000.

Section 5 permits absentee ballots to be deposited into a secure drop box for elections prior to July 1, 2021. As drop boxes were ordered for absentee ballots for the 2020 primary election, no additional costs are anticipated as a result of this provision.

Additionally, this section requires municipal clerks to retrieve absentee ballots deposited to such drop boxes beginning twenty-nine days before the election and each weekday thereafter until the polls close. If said drop box is located outside of a building other than where the clerk's office is located, the clerk, or their designee, must be escorted by a police officer. Minimal costs may be incurred if town staff and local police departments cannot handle this provision with current staffing levels.

Section 6 allows town clerks to deliver sorted and checked absentee ballots to registrars of voters before election day to begin certain pre-counting procedures. No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of this provision.

Sections 7 – 12 authorizes municipalities to conduct certain absentee

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2 SOS ordered 200 drop boxes at a total cost of approximately $365,000, including shipping. Costs were supported by federal CARES Act funding.
ballot pre-counting procedures. No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of these provisions.

**Sections 15 – 20** extends numerous deadlines and timeframes associated with processing absentee ballots and canvassing and reports the returns. No fiscal impact is anticipated as a result of these provisions.

**The Out Years**

The fiscal impacts identified above regarding absentee voting changes only apply to elections and referenda prior to July 1, 2021, thus impacts will only be incurred in FY 21.