

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-471

AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS AND STATE VOTING RIGHTS.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	Up to 3,540,273	Up to 1,040,273
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	208,840	208,840

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 23 \$	FY 24 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	Significant	Significant

Explanation

This bill generally codifies into state law several aspects of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 which bans discrimination in voting and elections and establishes a mechanism for certain jurisdictions with a history of discrimination against racial and language minorities to seek preapproval before changing their election laws. This will result in significant costs to the state and municipalities.

The bill, which requires the Secretary of the State (SOTS) to establish and maintain a database containing a range of elections and demographic data, results in a one-time start-up cost for equipment and

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 40.53% of payroll in FY 23.

software of up to \$3,000,000 in FY 23 and up to \$500,000 annually thereafter. There is also a cost for two additional staff: 1) one Manager of the statewide database, as required in the bill, with an annual salary of \$110,000 and associated fringe of \$44,583, and 2) one IT Analyst with an annual salary of \$92,372 and associated fringe of \$37,438.

The bill also requires SOTS to make determinations of certain municipal plans intended to protect specified classes of electors. This determination process may include various municipalities simultaneously in the years following a redistricting or court litigation. This is estimated to result in an annualized cost to SOTS of \$312,901 for four additional staff and associated fringe to the Office of the State Comptroller of \$126,819. The staff are anticipated to be one Deputy Elections Director, one Staff Attorney, one Elections Officer, and one Administrative Assistant.

Additionally, the bill requires a municipality to provide language-related assistance in voting and elections if SOTS determines, based on the American Community Survey results, that the municipality meets certain criteria. Additional costs to the SOTS will be dependent on the number of municipalities that meet these criteria and may be up to \$25,000 annually. Under Federal law, ten municipalities currently meet these criteria. As the bill expands these criteria, this will likely include more than ten municipalities.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission and certain parties are allowed under this bill to bring an action in the Superior Court in the district of an alleged violation. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

The Out Years

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

Sources: Core-CT Financial Accounting System