

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sHB-5004

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING EARLY VOTING.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$	FY 26\$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	Between \$1.8-2.3 million	Between \$0.8-1.3 million	Between \$0.7-1.2 million

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
All Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Cost	About \$900,000	About \$2,600,000	About \$900,000

Explanation

The bill would result in significant labor cost for both municipalities, as well as the state. Additionally, to implement the bill as described the state would need to acquire additional technology such as CVRS software updates and to install new lines in any secondary location for early voting. It is anticipated that roughly

40² additional sites would be opened across the state generally in

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.

² This calculation assumes that no town less than 45,000 will have a second location, half of all locations between 45,001-75,000; all locations between 75,001-100,000 will have two locations; all locations between 101,001-125,000 will have three locations; and

proportion to the population of the town. The costs would also be borne by the state in addition to the cost for the public information campaign specifically for early voting and registrar's training materials. The bill places the onus of all labor costs on the municipalities individually, so the state's share of the costs mostly take effect in FY 24 as one-time expenses of roughly \$1,000,000³ in year one and are reduced from year two onward. The largest differential in the range is the cost of the public information campaign for early voting. The Secretary of State's Office has indicated there would be about a \$500,000 range in costs depending upon implementation decisions.

Municipal costs would see the largest periodic fluctuation with the cost of municipal elections⁴ being significantly less expensive than those of primary and general state elections. This leaves the weight heavily on even FYs for municipalities. The net cost per municipality will also not be evenly distributed depending heavily on the number of polling places each town chooses to utilize. The initial polling place is assumed to be a central location with existing CVRS access and staffed by existing registrar and town staff. If a municipality were to only use this location, they could expect a rough increase on odd fiscal years of \$11,200⁵ and on even years of \$5,600 when no state general and primary elections are held.

Any municipal increasing beyond one location would require additional staff at that location with poll workers instead of overtime,

any greater than 125,001 will have four. Each town may not meet this criterion, but we estimate this will roughly be the number of additional polling locations.

³ Specific cost information for this section has come from data provided by the Secretary of State's Office in the form of estimates from existing vendors to provide the services rendered.

⁴ Municipal elections as a figure were estimated based on the % of towns expected to hold schoolboard elections in CT in 2023 and extrapolated with the remainder from that point in future years. Municipal elections are presumed to have only one EV polling place per town for each town. This estimate does not include municipal primaries.

⁵ The staffing for this location being existing employees mitigates cost for towns and leaves the differential to overtime hours varying depending on the number of EV hours and whether that day falls on a weekend. This estimate assumes an average overtime hour is valued at \$29.12 per hour.

which would drastically increasing the estimated total cost for that municipality. Any town planning three additional poll locations (the maximum number in the estimate) would see an odd fiscal year price increase of around \$90,000. This is largely due to the increased labor cost of poll workers and the need to fully staff early voting locations that may be potentially added because of the bill. Costs will vary on a town-by-town basis.

The bill varies from SB-1057 in that it includes a 14 day early voting period for general and primary elections instead of 10; and it includes early voting for town referendums⁶ not held in conjunction with general and primary elections. The difference between costs for all three early voting bills relates to the length of early voting and the elections covered on the municipal side. There is no distinction in state costs. HB-5004 is identical in legislation and cost to SB-1064.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation, participation, and number of polling places utilized across the state.

⁶ There is no clear data on the number and likelihood of town referendums to include each year. We have estimated that for each year there may be as many as three referendums and included that cost on the labor cost component for municipalities. Each town referendum assuming one voting place would cost roughly \$3,000 with a four-day EV window