

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

Legislative Office Building, Room 5200
Hartford, CT 06106 ◊ (860) 240-0200
<http://www.cga.ct.gov/ofa>

sHB-5004

AN ACT IMPLEMENTING EARLY VOTING.

As Amended by House "A" (LCO 7397)

House Calendar No.: 237

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	Approximately \$1,300,000	Approximately \$1,320,000	Approximately \$700,000

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
All Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ¹ - Cost	N/A	Approximately \$2,600,000	Approximately \$1,350,000

Explanation

The bill would result in significant ongoing labor cost to the state and municipalities. 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 approximately

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.

40² additional sites would be opened across the state generally in proportion to the population of each town. The state costs would include the public information campaign specifically for early voting and registrar's training materials. The bill makes no mention of labor costs, so it is assumed by default to fall to the municipalities. The state's share of the costs begins in FY 24 and continues to grow into FY 25 with roughly \$600,000 in onetime costs falling in each year in addition to \$696,000³ in ongoing expenses beginning in FY 25. There could be a differential of roughly \$500,000 in state costs depending on whether the voter public information campaign is included within the FY 24 and FY 25 biennium budget.

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 fiscal years for municipal election costs. The net cost per municipality would 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 an approximate increase in odd fiscal years of \$10,500⁵ and on even fiscal years of \$8,400 when no state general and primary elections are held.

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 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. The same is assumed for 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.

Any municipality increasing beyond one polling location would require additional staff at that location with poll workers instead of overtime, which would increase the estimated total cost for that municipality. Any town planning three additional polling locations (the maximum number in the estimate) would see an odd fiscal year price increase of around \$100,000. 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 would vary widely on a town-by-town basis.

House Amendment "A" (1) reduces the primary times for most primaries to seven and four days respectively; (2) reduces the special election early voting days to four; and (3) shifts the start date of early voting as week as making changes concerning election day registration.

The Out Years

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