

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-1226

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE VOTING RIGHTS IN
RECOGNITION OF JOHN R. LEWIS.

As Amended by Senate "A" (LCO 8791)

House Calendar No.: 613

Senate Calendar No.: 364

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	263,822	263,822
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	1,916,625	1,115,306

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Various Municipalities	STATE MANDATE ² - Potential Cost	Significant	Significant

Explanation

The bill would result in an estimated total cost to the state of \$2,180,447 in FY 24 and \$1,379,128 in FY 25. The bill would also result in significant cost to various municipalities, some costs for UConn voter

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 42.82% of payroll in FY 24.

² 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.

center and the Office of the Secretary of the State. The 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.

The bill requires the Secretary of the State (SOTS) to establish and maintain a database containing a range of elections and demographic data, which will be done through the UConn voter center. The UConn voter center receives the entirety of its funding from the Office of the Secretary of State. The bill empowers the Secretary of State to partner with the University of Connecticut or the University of Connecticut system to fulfill the obligations of section 3. To facilitate this the University of Connecticut would require additional full-time positions and graduate positions to do so. This would result in total costs in FY 24 of \$775,506 in FY 24 and \$474,187 in FY 25.

There is also a cost for two additional staff for the Secretary of State's office: 1) one Manager of the statewide database, as required in the bill, with an annual salary of \$110,000 and associated fringe of \$47,102, and 2) one IT Analyst with an annual salary of \$92,372 and associated fringe of \$39,554.

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 \$413,747 for four additional staff and associated fringe to the Office of the State Comptroller of \$177,166. The staff are anticipated to be one Deputy Elections Director, two Staff Attorneys, and one Elections Officer.

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 or data of similar quality, 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 of the most recent census³. The bill adjusts this to include community commonality criterion that may narrow the cost from the original bill. Municipalities are also required to hold public hearings to address potential violations that may induce additional costs for municipalities.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission, The Attorney General 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.

Senate "A" eliminates the original bill and its associated fiscal impact, and results in the impact described above.

The Out Years

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

The preceding Fiscal Impact statement is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for the purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

³ [Federal Register, 2021 Report](#)