



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Terry Steele

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.J.R. 19 of the 132nd G.A.

Status: As Introduced

Sponsor: Reps. LaTourette and Holmes

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Subject: Modifies the requirements for the initiative petition process

State Fiscal Highlights

- The resolution proposes to submit to the state's voters a constitutional amendment modifying the criteria for which both initiated constitutional amendments and initiated proposed statutes may appear on the ballot. If adopted, there could be fewer initiative ballot issues in the future.
- Funding under the purview of the Controlling Board is used to reimburse the Secretary of State for expenses incurred in advertising ballot issues statewide. The amounts of the reimbursements approved by the Controlling Board are transferred to the Statewide Ballot Advertising Fund (Fund 5FH0) under the Secretary of State's budget.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Initiative petition process

The resolution alters the process for placing both initiated constitutional amendments and initiated proposed statutes on the ballot. With respect to constitutional amendments, the resolution alters the signature requirements on the petition as well as the threshold for passage of a measure by voters. The signature process and supplemental petition process for initiated proposed statutes is also altered under the resolution. Please refer to the LSC Bill Analysis for the specific changes.

Ballot advertising costs

If both houses of the General Assembly approve the resolution and the issue is placed on the statewide ballot, the Secretary of State will incur costs for ballot advertising under Section 1 of Article XVI of the Ohio Constitution. Section 1 requires that the ballot language, the explanations, and arguments, if any, be published once a week for three consecutive weeks preceding the election in at least one newspaper of general circulation in each county of the state where a newspaper is published.

The ballot advertising costs that the Secretary of State incurs are paid for on a reimbursement basis from Fund 5KMO appropriation item 911614, Controlling Board Emergency Purposes/Contingencies under the Controlling Board's purview. Once

authorized, the reimbursable amounts are transferred to the Statewide Ballot Advertising Fund (Fund 5FH0) under the Secretary of State's budget, specifically line item 050621, Statewide Ballot Advertising. Ballot advertising expenses depend on the length of the ballot language. As a guide, the Secretary of State spent \$426,380 in ballot advertising costs for statewide issues that appeared on the ballot during the November 6, 2018 General Election.

Overall, the changes set forth in the resolution would appear to have the effect of increasing the thresholds necessary to place measures on the ballot either through constitutional amendment or proposed statute. If this were to be the case, then the Secretary of State's Office would potentially see a reduction in ballot advertising costs associated with the statutorily required advertising of such measures.