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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
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Office

H.B. 552
135th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 552's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Lear and Wiggam

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS) and county boards of elections (BOEs) to review, flag, and attempt to update each voter registration record where certain information is missing or inconsistent.
- County boards of elections will incur indeterminate costs based on the number of additional confirmation notices sent, provisional ballots cast, and staff hours involved with the additional work. These costs will be the highest in the first year to bring electors into compliance and stabilize at a lower cost in subsequent years.
- The Secretary of State would likely incur minimal costs to review additional fields between databases for missing or inconsistent information. These costs would likely be paid from Fund 5990 appropriation line item 050629, Statewide Voter Registration Database.

Detailed Analysis

The bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS) and county boards of elections (BOEs) to review, flag, and attempt to update each voter registration record where certain information is missing or inconsistent. Specifically, the SOS will compare records in the Statewide Voter Registration Database (SWVRD), the database of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), and the Social Security Administration's (SSA) database by looking at each elector's (1) Ohio driver's license or state identification card number, (2) last four digits of their Social Security number, and (3) resident's address. BOEs will mail notice to flagged electors. Each flagged elector will need to either update this information, vote provisionally then provide appropriate documentation, or reregister at a later date. For more information comparing the current process and the requirements under the bill, see the [LSC bill analysis](#).

County boards of elections

BOEs will incur some additional costs resulting from the bill. The magnitude of the additional costs to BOEs is unclear. However, it appears that the bulk of any additional costs would be for increased staff time, postage for notices, and printing of additional provisional ballots. Presumably, the costs would be the greatest in the first year to bring electors into compliance. In subsequent years, the cost of these changes would be lower, as BOEs will have addressed existing records with missing or inconsistent data.

Notices

For each flagged record, the bill requires BOEs to send a confirmation notice with postage prepaid, a preaddressed return envelope, and a form on which the elector may verify or correct the elector's registration. The material cost of each notice should be approximately \$1.60 comprised of two 73¢ United States Postal Service stamps. On a practical level, it appears that the bill would cause the boards to send confirmation notices to two groups of electors who would not necessarily receive those notices under current law or directive: (1) electors who registered without providing an Ohio DL/ID or SSN-4, as permitted until 2023, and (2) electors who have moved and have failed to notify either the BMV or the board of elections, and who have not used the National Change of Address Service. It is unclear how many electors would receive a notice under these two categories.

Provisional ballots

Similarly, the number of these electors who do not update their registration after receiving notice and subsequently who need to vote using a provisional ballot is unclear. The difference in cost between each provisional ballot and the standard ballot varies by the voting system used by each BOE. Overall, 48 counties use preprinted ballots costing roughly 30¢ to 40¢ per ballot, 28 counties use electronically marked and separately tabulated ballots costing approximately 11¢ per ballot, and 12 use directly recorded electronic ballots with a voter-verified paper trail costing approximately 8¢ per ballot. A [county map of voting systems \(PDF\)](#) is available on the SOS website: ohiosos.gov/elections/elections-officials. During the 2022 general election, there were approximately 79,000 provisional ballots cast.

Secretary of State

The SOS could incur minimal cost to perform checks on additional fields between databases. These costs would likely be paid from Fund 5990 appropriation line item 050629, Statewide Voter Registration Database. Under the current procedure, the SOS regularly compares the information in the SWVRD against BMV and SSA records and sends the boards electronic packets that notify them of each registration for which the Ohio driver's license or state identification card number, last four digits of the Social Security number, last name, first name, or date of birth could not be verified. The packets also include any electors who, according to BMV and SSA records, are deceased. Within ten days of receiving a packet, the board is required to review all the information in the packet and send each elector a confirmation notice, unless the board determines that the data mismatch was a result of a data entry error by the election officials. However, unlike under the bill, an elector who is sent a confirmation notice under this directive is not required to vote provisionally.