

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 423
Ways and Means

(Delegate Kelly, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law – Voter Registration Drive – High Schools

This bill requires a local board of elections to conduct a voter registration drive in each public high school in the county, at least once a year, in a manner agreed to by the local board of elections and the county board of education. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2019.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by not more than \$18,000 annually beginning in FY 2020. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Any costs incurred by local boards of elections to implement the bill are expected to be minimal.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires that, at least once each school year, each local board of elections conduct a voter registration drive in each public high school in the county in a manner specified in an agreement between the local board of elections and the county board of education. Each public official responsible for the use of a public high school must make available to the local board of elections, without charge, the space that is needed in the building for the proper conduct of a voter registration drive.

“Voter registration drive” means a voter registration site administered by a local board of elections where voter registration applications approved by the State Board of Elections

(SBE) are distributed to individuals eligible to register to vote. “Voter registration drive” may include:

- an event on school property, during school hours, open to each employee of and student enrolled in the school who is or will be age 16 or older during the immediately following year, where completed voter registration applications are accepted by a local board of elections official, employee, or authorized volunteer for transmittal to the appropriate election official; or
- local board of elections officials, employees, or authorized volunteers visiting classrooms within a school, during school hours, distributing voter registration applications to each employee of and student enrolled in the school who is or will be age 16 or older during the immediately following year and accepting completed voter registration applications for transmittal to the appropriate election official.

Current Law: Under State law, with certain exceptions, an individual may register to vote if the individual is a citizen of the United States, is at least age 16, and is a resident of the State as of the day the individual seeks to register.

An individual may apply to become a registered voter through a number of means including (1) visiting an election board office; (2) by mail; (3) when applying for services at a voter registration agency (specified public and nongovernmental agencies designated by SBE, including agencies providing public assistance and services for individuals with disabilities, public higher education institutions, and military recruiting offices); (4) pursuant to Chapter 287 of 2016 and Chapter 19 of 2018 (with statutory implementation dates during 2019), during an applicable transaction at electronic voter registration agencies (soon to be “automatic voter registration agencies” under Chapter 19 of 2018, effective July 1, 2019), which are the Motor Vehicle Administration, the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, local departments of social services, and the Mobility Certification Office in the Maryland Transit Administration; or (5) through SBE’s online voter registration system.

State Fiscal Effect: General fund expenditures increase by not more than \$18,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2020. This estimate assumes that SBE prints each year, for the use of the local boards of elections in implementing the bill, an amount of voter registration applications equal to not more than 75% of the total population of students and employees at public schools who are or will be age 16 or older during the immediately following year. The estimate of 75% is used, instead of 100%, in that at least some of the voter registration drives will be at specific locations in the schools and will not involve distributing a voter registration application to each student and employee. The estimate also assumes that the total number of students and employees at public schools who are or will be age 16 or older during the immediately following year is in the range of approximately 220,000, accounting for high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

The annual general fund expenditure increase may only be a fraction of \$18,000, in part because voter registration drives are already being conducted in high schools in at least some counties, reducing the number of additional voter registration applications needed to implement the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: SB 934 (Senator Waldstreicher) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Charles, Frederick, and Montgomery counties; Department of Legislative Services

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