

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

Senate Bill 934 (Senator Waldstreicher)  
 Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Voter Registration - High Schools

This bill establishes procedures for administration of voter registration at public and private high schools designated by the State Board of Elections (SBE) as voter registration entities. **The bill takes effect October 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by \$55,000 annually beginning in FY 2021. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	0	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000
Net Effect	\$0	(\$55,000)	(\$55,000)	(\$55,000)	(\$55,000)

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** Local school system expenditures may increase beginning in FY 2021. Local revenues are not affected. **This bill may impose a mandate on a unit of local government.**

**Small Business Effect:** None.

Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The bill requires SBE to designate public and private high schools as voter registration entities where qualified employees and enrolled students may apply to register to vote. Each designated high school must (1) designate faculty or staff members to distribute and accept voter registration applications approved by SBE; (2) distribute a voter

registration application at least twice each school year to each employee and student who is or will be age 16 or older during that year; and (3) accept completed voter registration applications returned to a designated faculty or staff member, for transmittal to the appropriate election official.

An applicant may mail the voter registration application to the appropriate State election official or return it to a designated faculty or staff member. Within five days after accepting a voter registration application, a designated faculty or staff member must transmit the application to the appropriate State election official.

Each designated high school also must provide a specified document to prospective registrants that, among other things, asks if the individual would like to register to vote, if not already registered, and provides information on assistance and the ability to file a complaint with SBE about any interference with the individual's right to register or decline to register, right to privacy, or right to choose a political party or other political preference.

A faculty or staff member may not (1) seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration; (2) display any political preference or party allegiance at the designated time of registration; or (3) make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not to register has any bearing on the applicant's employment or enrollment status.

A faculty or staff member may review an application for completeness out of the applicant's presence and may notify an applicant of an incomplete application and allow the applicant to complete the application.

Information relating to a declination to register to vote at a high school may not be used for any purpose other than the maintenance of voter registration statistics and the identity of a high school through which a particular voter registered may not be disclosed to the public.

Any regulations adopted to carry out the requirements of the bill, including provisions for training employees of high schools, must be adopted by SBE in cooperation with the State Board of Education.

**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 \$55,000 annually beginning in fiscal 2021 (reflecting the bill’s October 1, 2020 effective date), assuming SBE has to print approximately 250,000 voter registration applications twice each year for distribution to employees and students at public and private high schools in the State. The assumption of 250,000 voter registration applications being needed is based on 2017 Maryland State Department of Education statistics, accounting for high school students in grades 10, 11, and 12.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local school system expenditures may increase beginning in fiscal 2021 to compensate faculty or staff members who are designated to distribute and accept voter registration applications. Of a small number of local school systems contacted, Anne Arundel, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties’ school systems indicated the potential for increased costs. Montgomery County Public Schools, for example, estimates that teacher stipends to cover time spent on voter registration activities could total \$36,250 per year. Baltimore City Public Schools and Charles County Public Schools, however, do not expect the bill to have a material fiscal impact.

---

### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 423 (Delegate Kelly, *et al.*) - Ways and Means.

**Information Source(s):** State Board of Elections; Maryland State Department of Education; Anne Arundel, Charles, and Montgomery counties; Baltimore City Public Schools; Baltimore County Public Schools; Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Montgomery County Public Schools; Prince George’s County Public Schools; Charles County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 7, 2019  
mag/hlb

---

Analysis by: Scott D. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510