

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 624
Ways and Means

(Delegate Wells)

Election Law - Statewide Voter Registration Application - Prepaid Postage

This bill requires that a statewide voter registration application include a return envelope or envelope template with prepaid postage that the applicant may use to return the application to the State Board of Elections (SBE). The application must be accompanied by instructions for postage, including (1) a statement that the return envelope or envelope template includes prepaid postage and may be mailed as is and (2) directions for how an applicant may attach postage for the purpose of reducing the costs of the local board. Return envelopes or envelope templates must be preprinted with the SBE address. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by approximately \$5,000 annually beginning in FY 2026. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: Local government expenditures increase by approximately \$5,000 annually beginning in FY 2026. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

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 the SBE, including agencies providing public assistance and services for individuals with disabilities, public higher education institutions, military recruiting offices, and one-stop career centers in the Maryland Department of Labor); (4) during an applicable transaction at automatic voter registration agencies, 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; (5) through SBE's online voter registration system; or (6) at an early voting center or an election day polling place in their county of residence.

State and Local Fiscal Effect: State general fund expenditures and local government expenditures each increase by approximately \$5,000 (\$10,000 total) annually beginning in fiscal 2026, accounting for costs of prepaid postage on statewide voter registration applications. This estimate assumes (1) the prepaid postage costs are shared by SBE and the local boards; (2) on average, postage is paid on 6,000 applications returned by mail each year; and (3) business reply mail is used, resulting in a higher per application cost for postage, but allowing for postage to only be paid on applications that are returned and not all of those printed and made available to prospective registered voters.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 323 (Senator Kagan) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 9, 2025
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