

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2011

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 658 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Change Early Voting Period.

SPONSOR(S): Representatives Stam, Sager, Collins, and Jones

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes (X)	No ()	No Estimate Available ()		
	<u>FY 2011-12</u>	<u>FY 2012-13</u>	<u>FY 2013-14</u>	<u>FY 2014-15</u>	<u>FY 2015-16</u>
REVENUES					
EXPENDITURES					
Local Government:					
County Boards of Elections					
Costs Cannot Be Determined: See Assumptions and Methodology					
POSITIONS (cumulative):					
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED:					
State Board of Elections, County Boards of Elections					
EFFECTIVE DATE:					
Effective for elections held after January 1, 2012					

BILL SUMMARY:

This Bill amends the “one-stop” voting procedure in G.S. 163-227.2 by reducing the time required for such sites to be open. A “one stop” site is where qualified North Carolina residents are allowed to both register and vote an absentee ballot at the same time prior to an election.

Under current law a voter taking advantage of the “one stop” voting procedure must appear in person at the office of the county board of elections in which absentee ballots are authorized no earlier than the third Thursday before an election. This bill would reduce the time period to no earlier than the second Thursday before an election.

The county boards of elections are responsible for maintaining at least one “one-stop” voting site described in G.S. 163-227.2 but may operate more sites per G.S. 163-227(g). County board of elections are required to operate a “one-stop” site five days a week during regular business hours

until 1:00pm on the Saturday prior to the election (G.S. 163-227.2(f)). Counties may provide for the “one-stop” site to be on evenings and weekends and up to 5:00 pm on the Saturday prior to an election.

This bill is effective for elections held on or after January 1, 2012.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

County boards of elections are responsible for costs of providing at least one “one-stop” site and for providing the materials for voting and registration under general statute (G.S. 163-129, G.S. 163-33(6) and (7), and G.S. 163-227.2(e)). County boards of elections could potentially save \$1,945 per voting site under this bill using the analysis described below. However, cost savings statewide cannot be determined at this time, as the number of “one-stop” sites that a county would elect to provide for the various elections could not be determined by the State Board of Elections. Given uncertainty in the total number of voting sites for all counties, this is not included in the summary table.

In the past, the State Board of Elections has used federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds to provide grants to reimburse county board of elections to for the costs to provide “one-stop” voting sites. In order to obtain an estimated per site savings, this analysis only looked at those sites that requested HAVA funds and remained open the required amount of time. These 49 counties received funding for 124 sites for a total actual reimbursement of \$602,876 or \$4,862 per site.¹ Assuming that the counties started operating each site on the third Thursday before an election and closed the site at 1:00pm on the Saturday prior to the election, this would equate to 12.5 days that he site was open. The per day cost of running a site would be \$389. This bill would reduce the number of required days by five, leaving 7.5 days available for voters to take advantage of the site. Applying the per day cost determined above, the cost for counties would be \$2,917. This could equate to a county spending an average of \$1,945 less per site.

According to the State Board of Elections, there are no additional costs or savings to the State Board of Elections as a result of this bill. Fiscal Research concurs with this estimate.

SOURCES OF DATA: State Board of Elections

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

FISCAL RESEARCH DIVISION: (919) 733-4910

PREPARED BY: Mark Bondo

¹ In 2010, the State Board of Elections provided grants to 59 counties for 141 voting cities totaling \$669,202 in actual reimbursements. Ten of the counties in this amount used funds to provide for additional hours and days not required in Statute, and were not included in the analysis.

APPROVED BY:

Lynn Muchmore
Interim Director
Fiscal Research Division

DATE: April 14, 2011



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