

Fiscal Note

BILL # HB 2017

TITLE: voting centers ban; precinct size

SPONSOR: Keshel

STATUS: House Engrossed

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Description

The bill would prohibit designating election precincts larger than 1,000 registered voters and would also prohibit voting centers, and early voting locations for primary and general elections.

Estimated Impact

We estimate the bill would increase the number of required physical voting sites, which would increase county election costs. Election day location, staffing and equipment costs are funded by the counties. Because the bill would not impact election items funded by the state, the bill is not expected to increase state election costs.

Data solicited from the counties by the Arizona Association of Counties (AACo) indicates that statewide, the bill's provisions would require the addition of 3,957 new voting locations (*see Table 1 below*). This number of new voting locations is generally consistent with our calculations using publicly available data on the current number of voting sites and the number of locations that would be required under the bill.

The AACo data calculates that for these 3,957 additional locations statewide, the total election day costs for site usage and staffing would be \$10.8 million. This estimate would translate into a per location cost of \$2,700 [$\$10.8 \text{ million} / 3,957 \text{ locations} = \$2,700$]. The \$2,700 estimate appears generally reasonable based on 7 poll workers at each location earning approximately \$200 per day [$\$14.70/\text{hour minimum wage} \times 13 \text{ hour election day shift}$], plus ancillary costs such as site rental.

The \$10.8 million per election day location/staffing cost estimate would apply to each election. Arizona's current election schedule has the typical occurrence of 2 statewide elections (a primary and a general election) in a single fiscal year. Given this schedule, that would result in increased county location/staffing election costs of \$21.6 million in a fiscal year containing an election cycle.

In addition to the reoccurring location/staffing costs, AACo also solicited data from the counties regarding one-time major equipment costs for the new voting locations required under the bill. The AACo data indicates that establishing the new 3,957 voting locations would result in one-time equipment costs of \$31.5 million for counties statewide. This estimate would translate into a per location equipment cost of \$8,000 [$\$31.5 \text{ million} / 3,957 \text{ locations} = \$8,000$]. The \$8,000 estimate appears generally reasonable based on the assumption of purchasing several standard electronic pollbooks (with a typical cost of \$1,400 each) along with any required Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) voting devices (with a typical cost of \$3,700 each).

There is the potential for counties to realize some offsetting savings. For example, counties would see savings from the elimination of early voting locations and emergency voting centers as required under the bill. In addition, a greater number of election day voting locations could increase in-person voting and thereby reduce county expenses for early mail voting. However, we would expect any savings to be much less significant than the cost increases described above, and any indirect savings cannot be determined in advance.



Analysis

Under current law, counties may conduct in-person voting on election day at specified polling places within each election precinct, at voting centers (where voters from any precinct may vote), or a hybrid of those 2 systems. Currently 3 counties use the polling place model, 8 counties use the vote center system, and 4 counties use a hybrid system.

The bill would prohibit the use of voting centers, and would require the use of the polling place system with a limit of 1,000 registered voters assigned to each precinct. As an example of the new locations required under the bill, Maricopa County had an active voter registration count of 2,587,196 for the 2024 General Election. Given the 1,000 voter/precinct limit, the bill would require Maricopa County to have 2,588 voting locations in comparison to the significantly more limited number of voting centers authorized for the 2024 General Election.

As described above, the additionally required voting locations would increase country election expenses on a reoccurring basis for election day location and staffing costs, and would also result in one-time equipment costs for the new locations.

Table 1				
County Estimates of Election Day and One-Time Equipment Costs				
	New Voting Locations	Additional Poll Workers	Election Day (Staff & Site Use) Cost Estimate	Equipment Cost Estimate
Apache	32	200	\$35,000	\$289,900
Cochise	71	445	\$79,600	\$1,032,900
Coconino	62	310	\$93,000	\$327,500
Gila	38	266	\$74,800	\$340,000
Graham	26	130	\$26,500	\$107,500
Greenlee	No Data Provided			
La Paz	12	72	\$10,700	\$204,000
Maricopa	2,457	17,100	\$7,587,000	\$14,338,000
Mohave	137	845	\$115,200	\$1,370,000
Navajo	33			\$1,041,700
Pima	574	4,200	\$1,415,400	\$6,623,100
Pinal	206	1,500	\$463,300	\$1,596,000
Santa Cruz	No Data Provided			
Yavapai	173	500	\$360,500	\$482,000
Yuma	<u>136</u>	<u>1,738</u>	<u>\$590,200</u>	<u>\$3,730,800</u>
Total	3,957	27,306	\$10,851,200	\$31,483,400

4/23/2025