

Multiple Agency Fiscal Note Summary

Bill Number: 5993 SB	Title: Voter education
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Estimated Cash Receipts

NONE

Estimated Operating Expenditures

Agency Name	2023-25				2025-27				2027-29			
	FTEs	GF-State	NGF-Outlook	Total	FTEs	GF-State	NGF-Outlook	Total	FTEs	GF-State	NGF-Outlook	Total
Office of the Secretary of State	.0	0	0	0	.0	0	0	0	.0	0	0	0
Total \$	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0

Agency Name	2023-25			2025-27			2027-29		
	FTEs	GF-State	Total	FTEs	GF-State	Total	FTEs	GF-State	Total
Local Gov. Courts									
Loc School dist-SPI									
Local Gov. Other	Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion.								
Local Gov. Total									

Estimated Capital Budget Expenditures

Agency Name	2023-25			2025-27			2027-29		
	FTEs	Bonds	Total	FTEs	Bonds	Total	FTEs	Bonds	Total
Office of the Secretary of State	.0	0	0	.0	0	0	.0	0	0
Total \$	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0

Agency Name	2023-25			2025-27			2027-29		
	FTEs	GF-State	Total	FTEs	GF-State	Total	FTEs	GF-State	Total
Local Gov. Courts									
Loc School dist-SPI									
Local Gov. Other	Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion.								
Local Gov. Total									

Estimated Capital Budget Breakout

NONE

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Individual State Agency Fiscal Note

Bill Number: 5993 SB	Title: Voter education	Agency: 085-Office of the Secretary of State
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Part I: Estimates

No Fiscal Impact

Estimated Cash Receipts to:

NONE

Estimated Operating Expenditures from:

NONE

Estimated Capital Budget Impact:

NONE

The cash receipts and expenditure estimates on this page represent the most likely fiscal impact. Factors impacting the precision of these estimates, and alternate ranges (if appropriate), are explained in Part II.

Check applicable boxes and follow corresponding instructions:

- If fiscal impact is greater than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete entire fiscal note form Parts I-V.
- If fiscal impact is less than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete this page only (Part I).
- Capital budget impact, complete Part IV.
- Requires new rule making, complete Part V.

Legislative Contact: Greg Vogel	Phone: 360-786-7413	Date: 01/16/2024
Agency Preparation: Mike Woods	Phone: (360) 704-5215	Date: 01/19/2024
Agency Approval: Mike Woods	Phone: (360) 704-5215	Date: 01/19/2024
OFM Review: Cheri Keller	Phone: (360) 584-2207	Date: 01/22/2024

Part II: Narrative Explanation

II. A - Brief Description Of What The Measure Does That Has Fiscal Impact

Significant provisions of the bill and any related workload or policy assumptions that have revenue or expenditure impact on the responding agency by section number.

Sec. 1 would add a new section to chapter 29A.52 RCW. The proposed legislation states that local jurisdictions changing the voting system used to select candidates and choosing alternative methods of candidate selection must be responsible for educating all voters affected by the change. Consequently, it is necessary for county election officials to ensure full education of all voters participating in the changed system.

Sec. 2 would add a new section to chapter 29A.52 RCW that lists the voting jurisdictions' requirements if they change the method of selecting a candidate. The jurisdiction must make notification to the public of the change and create a public education campaign intended to familiarize the voting public with any unique elements of the new process. This section also identifies the required elements of the public education campaigns. It should be noted that the costs of the education campaign are to be borne solely by the election office serving the voting jurisdiction.

Sec. 3 would add a new section to chapter 29A.52 RCW to declare that any eligible voter residing in the voting jurisdiction may file an action against the voting jurisdiction and the election office serving the voting jurisdiction, if they find the public education and outreach campaign described in this act were inadequate in meeting any of the requirements.

II. B - Cash receipts Impact

Cash receipts impact of the legislation on the responding agency with the cash receipts provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of the revenue sources. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the cash receipts impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

II. C - Expenditures

Agency expenditures necessary to implement this legislation (or savings resulting from this legislation), with the provisions of the legislation that result in the expenditures (or savings) identified by section number. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the expenditure impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into cost estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

There is no fiscal impact to the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS). Section 2(5) requires that costs of the education campaigns are to be borne solely by the voting jurisdiction through reimbursement of the election office serving the jurisdiction. OSOS assumes local jurisdictions may seek its advice. However, the OSOS believes the impact of providing such advice could be covered within existing resources.

Part III: Expenditure Detail

III. A - Operating Budget Expenditures

NONE

III. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose

NONE

III. C - Operating FTE Detail: *FTEs listed by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals agree with total FTEs in Part I and Part IIIA.*

NONE

III. D - Expenditures By Program (optional)

NONE

Part IV: Capital Budget Impact

IV. A - Capital Budget Expenditures

NONE

IV. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose

NONE

IV. C - Capital Budget Breakout

Acquisition and construction costs not reflected elsewhere on the fiscal note and description of potential financing methods.

NONE

IV. D - Capital FTE Detail: *FTEs listed by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals agree with total FTEs in Part IVB.*

NONE

Part V: New Rule Making Required

Provisions of the bill that require the agency to adopt new administrative rules or repeal/revise existing rules.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL NOTE

Department of Commerce

Bill Number: 5993 SB

Title: Voter education

Part I: Jurisdiction-Location, type or status of political subdivision defines range of fiscal impacts.

Legislation Impacts:

- Cities: Could incur voter outreach and education expenses if a city chooses to change its voting method.
- Counties: Same as above. Additionally, counties in which a voting system is changed would incur initial, indeterminate voter outreach and education costs.
- Special Districts:
- Specific jurisdictions only:
- Variance occurs due to:

Part II: Estimates

- No fiscal impacts.
- Expenditures represent one-time costs:
- Legislation provides local option:
- Key variables cannot be estimated with certainty at this time: Which city or county may change its voting system; the cost of the voter education and outreach campaign.

Estimated revenue impacts to:

None

Estimated expenditure impacts to:

Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion.

Part III: Preparation and Approval

Fiscal Note Analyst: Kate Fernald	Phone: 564-200-3519	Date: 01/23/2024
Leg. Committee Contact: Greg Vogel	Phone: 360-786-7413	Date: 01/16/2024
Agency Approval: Allan Johnson	Phone: 360-725-5033	Date: 01/23/2024
OFM Review: Cheri Keller	Phone: (360) 584-2207	Date: 01/23/2024

Part IV: Analysis

A. SUMMARY OF BILL

Description of the bill with an emphasis on how it impacts local government.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2.(1) The relevant jurisdiction and its county auditor would be required to notify voters and create a public education campaign whenever a local jurisdiction changes the voting system used to select candidates and chooses alternative methods of candidate selection not defined in chapter 29A.52 RCW. All required education campaign elements are detailed in this subsection.

Sec. 2 (5) states the local jurisdiction would be responsible for all costs incurred by notifying and educating voters, including reimbursing the county election office for their associated costs.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 3 would allow any eligible voter in a jurisdiction that has changed the method of candidate selection to a method other than those required in chapter 29A.52 who finds the public education and outreach campaign associated with the change inadequate in meeting the requirements of section 2 of this act to file an action against the voting jurisdiction and the election office serving the voting jurisdiction.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 5 would establish a take effect date of January 1, 2025.

B. SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE IMPACTS

Expenditure impacts of the legislation on local governments with the expenditure provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of expenditures. Delineated between city, county and special district impacts.

Cities and counties changing their voting system would incur indeterminate costs associated with the voter outreach and education campaign that the legislation would require for any jurisdiction that changed its voting method. Additionally, counties in which a voting system is changed would incur initial outreach and education costs, but the jurisdiction that changed the voting system would reimburse counties for those expenses.

BACKGROUND

According to the Washington State Association of Auditors (WSACA), without legislation allowing jurisdictions to adopt ranked choice voting, or any other alternative voting method, non-charter jurisdictions cannot make change their voting system. The only jurisdictions that can change their voting method are charter counties and cities.

According to Municipal Research Services Center (MRSC), Washington has seven charter counties (Clark, San Juan, Pierce, Snohomish, Whatcom, Clallam and King), and 10 charter cities (Aberdeen, Bellingham, Bremerton, Everett, Seattle, Spokane, Richland, Tacoma, Vancouver and Yakima.)

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The proposed legislation would require a jurisdiction that has changed their voting method to conduct a public education and outreach campaign. According to WSACA, seven counties and 10 cities are allowed to change their voting system, but their cost impacts are indeterminate because the future number of jurisdictions that will make changes outlined in the bill cannot be predicted in advance. Likewise, voter education and outreach campaigns will vary significantly by jurisdiction, so the cost impacts of outreach and education are also indeterminate.

Counties in which a voting system is changed would incur initial outreach and education costs, but the jurisdiction that changed the voting system would reimburse counties for those expenses.

WSACA notes that voter education and outreach campaigns would incur varying costs due to the fact that they would include, but not be limited to:

1. The size of the jurisdiction
2. Whether or not other jurisdictions in the county had already used the proposed method (i.e. how familiar the voters were. For example: if the city was already using Ranked Choice Voting and the school district decided to use the same

method.)

3. The media market where the jurisdiction is located

4. Media outlets serving the jurisdiction

5. Social media presence of the jurisdiction

6. Postage costs for mailing to that jurisdiction exclusively (for example: mailing to every address in a county is far less expensive per piece than first class mail to households or voters in any particular jurisdiction)

7. Translation requirements

8. Community groups' cooperation

C. SUMMARY OF REVENUE IMPACTS

Revenue impacts of the legislation on local governments, with the revenue provisions identified by section number, and when appropriate, the detail of revenue sources. Delineated between city, county and special district impacts.

Counties would incur one-time, indeterminate revenue increases when a jurisdiction that changed its voting system reimburses a county for the voter outreach and education campaign expenses.

County election offices would incur indeterminate voter education and outreach expenses when a jurisdiction within the county changed its voting system. However, the legislation would hold the jurisdiction that changed its voting system responsible for reimbursing counties for all associated voter outreach and education costs. In recovering voter outreach and education expenses, county revenue would increase proportionately to the county's voter education and outreach costs. Because jurisdictions would be reimbursing counties for the cost of the campaign, counties would experience a net zero impact. Counties do not profit off of education and outreach campaigns.

SOURCES:

Municipal Research and Services Center

Washington State Association of County Auditors