

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

ELEC 1/30/2018

LRB Number	17-4560/1	Introduction Number	SB-524	Estimate Type	Original
Description using an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

The proposed Absentee Voting Efficiency Option (AVEO) legislation outlines a new, optional voting process available to qualified municipalities during the in-person absentee voting timeframe. The AVEO process would allow voters to cast their in-person absentee ballot into electronic voting equipment in the weeks prior to an election. Under current law, voters who participate in in-person absentee voting do not cast their voted ballot into electronic voting equipment but instead place their marked ballot into an absentee certificate envelope. The ballot is then kept sealed in the certificate envelope until Election Day, at which time, the envelope is opened, and the ballot is cast by a poll worker into the electronic voting equipment, if available. The proposed legislation makes the AVEO process optional for municipalities and only available to municipalities who have the voting equipment and security resources required for certified use of the AVEO process.

In constructing this estimate, the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) made assumptions as to the responsibilities that would be assigned to the agency when implementing the AVEO law. The WEC assumes that the AVEO proposal requires the WEC to develop a process through which municipalities apply for certification to use the AVEO process. Once the process is developed, the WEC would then be responsible for examining and approving AVEO applications received from municipalities. It is also assumed that the WEC will prescribe the administrative process for AVEO and develop guidance and training for municipalities. In addition, it is assumed that the WEC will program the statewide election administration system, WisVote, to accommodate the AVEO process. Because the AVEO process is optional to municipalities and the WEC does not have data on municipal costs to administer AVEO, no exact municipal costs are outlined in this estimate but potential areas for municipal costs and savings are anticipated below in section 5.

When developing this estimate, the WEC assumed anticipated costs related to the AVEO legislation in the following categories:

Major Tasks Assumed for the Implementation of Proposed AVEO law

1. WEC Creation of and On-Going Approval of Municipal Application to Use AVEO Cost: \$5,712
 2. WEC Creation of AVEO Specific Training Materials Cost: \$9,240
 3. WEC Update of Existing Materials and Resources Cost: \$5,376
 4. WEC Programming Agency Technology to Accommodate AVEO Cost: \$15,814
 5. Municipality Implementation Costs and Long-Term Cost Savings of AVEO Unknown
- Total Cost to the WEC for the Implementation of the Proposed AVEO Law: \$36,142

Detailed information on the estimated costs of each assumed task is outlined in sections 1-5 below.

1. WEC Creation of and On-Going Approval of Municipal Applications to Use AVEO

The proposed legislation outlines the WEC's role in certifying municipalities to use AVEO in §6.982(9)(a). This estimate assumes that the WEC will need to create an application process for municipalities to apply to the WEC for certification to use the AVEO process. It is assumed that WEC staff must first develop standards for AVEO certification and that the standards will include an analysis of the municipality's voting equipment for write-in report functionality, examination of the municipality's ballot and voting equipment security procedures, and a review of the municipality's AVEO procedures, plans, and related ordinances.

When considering the fiscal impact of the development of the AVEO certification process, the WEC assumes responsibility for the following tasks and associated costs:

It is estimated that the development, review and editing of the AVEO application for municipal use will take

WEC staff 40 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$1,344.

It is estimated that the analysis, development, review and editing of the AVEO voting equipment and security standards will take WEC staff an estimated 40 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$1,344.

While it is unknown how many municipalities will apply to the WEC to use the AVEO process, WEC staff anticipates that each municipal AVEO application will take an average of 3 hours to process and approve. For the purpose of this estimate, the WEC will assume that 30 municipalities will apply for AVEO certification upon initial implementation of the law and each application will take WEC staff 3 hours to process at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$3,024.

The WEC estimates the sub-total costs related to approving municipal applications to use AVEO to be \$5,712.

2. WEC- Creation of AVEO Specific Training Materials

While the proposed legislation does not specifically outline training needs or resources required when implementing AVEO, the WEC does have a statutory responsibility to provide training to municipal clerks on new voting processes. It is assumed for this estimate that the WEC will be responsible for prescribing procedures and developing training for municipal clerks on the AVEO process.

Because the AVEO process is optional for municipalities and is unavailable for the use of municipalities without the required voting equipment and resources, detailed AVEO information will not be included in manuals and training materials on other required election administration topics. Therefore, the WEC assumes that dedicated materials related to the optional AVEO process would need to be created. As is typical for the implementation of any new election law, the WEC uses a variety of media to train municipal clerks. Training methods include the creation and distribution of manuals, guidance materials, and the use of webinar training sessions. The WEC also typically creates and prescribes forms for the use of municipal clerks to accomplish new processes.

It is anticipated that WEC staff will need to develop dedicated manuals, guidance materials, webinars, and forms for municipal clerks on the AVEO process as well as associated processes for securing ballots and voting equipment, conducting enhanced pre-election voting equipment testing, voter accessibility, and daily AVEO vote tally reporting.

When considering the fiscal impact of providing training to municipal clerks on the AVEO process the WEC assumes responsibility for the following tasks and associated costs:

It is estimated that the analysis, creation, review and editing of AVEO specific manuals and guidance will take WEC staff 200 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$6,720.

It is estimated that WEC staff will need to prepare materials for and conduct two webinars dedicated to the AVEO process. It is estimated that the preparation and presentation of these webinars will take WEC staff 25 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$840.

It is estimated that WEC staff will need to create 5 new forms for the proposed AVEO process including an AVEO specific absentee ballot application, tamper evident seal log, and daily ballot tally log. It is estimated that each of the 5 forms will take an estimated 10 hours for WEC staff to analyze, create, review, and edit at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$1,680.

The WEC estimates the sub-total costs related to creating AVEO-specific training materials to be \$9,240.

3. WEC Update of Existing Materials and Resources

In addition to creating AVEO specific training materials for municipal clerks, the WEC also assumes the need for updating existing election administration resources to reference the new AVEO process. The WEC currently has manuals, training materials, guidance documents, and other resources that outline absentee voting processes. Comprehensive clerk resources, such as the Election Administration Manual would need to be updated to reference the AVEO process and the newly created AVEO manual.

The WEC also provides informational guides on absentee voting to the public. The information is provided through agency websites such as elections.wi.gov, myvote.wi.gov, and bringit.wi.gov. Existing WEC voter resources about absentee voting would need to be identified and updated to reference the AVEO process.

When considering the fiscal impact of updating existing resources, the WEC assumes responsibility for the following tasks and associated costs:

It is anticipated that WEC staff will need to update existing clerk resources such as manuals and guidance documents to reference the AVEO process and separate AVEO training materials. It is estimated that updating these materials will take WEC staff 50 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$1,680.

It is anticipated that WEC staff will need to update existing voter resources such as voter guides and handouts to reference the possibility of AVEO in their jurisdiction. It is estimated that updating these materials will take WEC staff 40 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$1,344.

It is anticipated that WEC staff will need to update text and information on the agency's three major websites, elections.wi.gov, myvote.wi.gov, and bringit.wi.gov to reference the AVEO process. It is estimated that updating these materials will take WEC staff 70 hours at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe), for a total cost of \$2,352.

The WEC estimates the sub-total costs related to updating existing materials and resources to be \$5,376.

4. WEC Programming Agency Technology to Accommodate AVEO

The proposed legislation tasks the WEC with updating the statewide elections administration system, WisVote, to accommodate for the new requirements of the AVEO process. Among the most significant changes that would be required is the ability for the WisVote system to issue ballots under the AVEO process and to sequentially number the absentee ballot certifications and the AVEO absentee ballot request log. This is not currently a functionality of the WisVote system. Significant IT development time would be required to make the requested changes. Once the development team makes the initial changes to the programming of the system, WEC staff would then need to test the system to ensure it is functioning properly.

It is also assumed that in addition to changes to the WisVote system, the MyVote Wisconsin website, which is the public facing portal for the WisVote system, would also need to be updated. The anticipated changes to MyVote would allow voters to access information about whether AVEO or traditional in-person absentee voting is available in their municipality. The proposed legislation also mentions modifications to the WisVote system and the electronic poll book system to allow for the electronic capture of signatures. It is assumed that the AVEO process requires the electronic capture and storage of voter signatures in the WisVote system. The software to collect signatures and the server space required to store the signatures would represent an annual cost to the WEC.

When considering the fiscal impact of updating state elections technology to accommodate the AVEO process, the WEC assumes responsibility for the following tasks and associated costs:

It is estimated that the initial IT development to accommodate the AVEO process in the WisVote System will take WEC IT contract staff 60 hours at an average cost of \$95 per hour for a total of \$5,700. It is also estimated that WEC program staff will then need to dedicate 40 hours to the development of business rules and user acceptance testing at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe) for a total of \$2,016, resulting in total IT development costs related to WisVote of \$7,716.

It is estimated that the initial IT development to accommodate the AVEO process in the MyVote system will take WEC IT contract staff 20 hours at an estimated cost of \$95 per hour for a total of \$2,090. It is also estimated that WEC program staff will then need to dedicate 30 hours to the development of business rules and user acceptance testing at an average cost of \$33.60 per hour (\$25.85 wage + \$7.75 fringe) for a total of \$1,009, for total IT development costs related to MyVote of \$3,098.

It is anticipated that WEC may need to purchase additional server storage for the WisVote system to accommodate the capture of electronic signatures. It is also anticipated that WEC may need to make additional modifications to the electronic poll book and related signature capture software. The cost for additional storage is approximately \$0.58/GB per month and it is anticipated that about 600/GB would be

needed for an annual cost of nearly \$5,000.

The WEC estimates sub-total costs related to programming agency technology to accommodate AVEO to be \$15,814.

5. Municipality Implementation Costs and Long-Term Cost Savings of AVEO

While the WEC does not know the direct impact on local governments, it is assumed that there will be some costs to municipalities who choose to implement AVEO as well as potential long-term cost savings to municipalities.

Because the AVEO process is optional for municipalities and no municipality would be required to use the process, the WEC assumes that the municipalities would analyze the fiscal impact of AVEO on their jurisdiction before opting to use the process. It is assumed that during that decision-making process municipalities will weigh cost along with other factors when making a decision on the suitability of AVEO for their jurisdiction.

While the WEC does not know what the direct fiscal impact of implementing AVEO will be on municipal and county governments, it assumes that there will be some initial costs to implement the process. It is assumed that some of the potential costs to municipalities include: voter education such as mailings and training of poll workers. It is also assumed that increased time may be required to accommodate the enhanced pre-election voting equipment testing, security protocols, and daily tally reporting.

The WEC also assumes that municipalities who opt to use the AVEO process may experience a decrease in costs associated with in-person absentee balloting on an ongoing basis. Under the current law, the issuing of in-person ballots and subsequent processing of those ballots at the polls on election day has become a resource intensive and arguably unsustainable burden on municipalities due to the increased popularity of absentee voting in recent years. It is assumed that the need for certificate envelopes during in-person absentee voting is eliminated for municipalities using AVEO. Also, ballots cast using the AVEO process are cast into electronic voting equipment during the in-person voting process eliminating the need to process those ballots at the polls on Election Day. It is assumed that municipalities who choose to use the AVEO process may see a decrease in the amount of time needed to conduct in-person absentee voting and a decrease in the number of poll workers needed to process absentee ballots at the polls on election day.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications

Fiscal Estimate Worksheet - 2017 Session

Detailed Estimate of Annual Fiscal Effect

Original
 Updated
 Corrected
 Supplemental

LRB Number 17-4560/1		Introduction Number SB-524	
Description using an electronic voting machine to cast a vote with an in-person absentee ballot			
I. One-time Costs or Revenue Impacts for State and/or Local Government (do not include in annualized fiscal effect):			
The total implementation costs of the legislation at the state level are estimated to be \$36,142. The costs and time for implementation are not currently budgeted or included in the agency's projects plan, especially for implementation prior to the 2018 General Election. Potential costs and savings at the local level are permissive, as the legislation makes the AVEO process voluntary at the option of the municipal governing body.			
II. Annualized Costs:		Annualized Fiscal Impact on funds from:	
		Increased Costs	Decreased Costs
A. State Costs by Category			
	State Operations - Salaries and Fringes	\$23,353	\$
	(FTE Position Changes)	(0.0 FTE)	
	State Operations - Other Costs	12,789	
	Local Assistance		
	Aids to Individuals or Organizations		
	TOTAL State Costs by Category	\$36,142	\$
B. State Costs by Source of Funds			
	GPR	36,142	
	FED		
	PRO/PRS		
	SEG/SEG-S		
III. State Revenues - Complete this only when proposal will increase or decrease state revenues (e.g., tax increase, decrease in license fee, ets.)			
		Increased Rev	Decreased Rev
	GPR Taxes	\$	\$
	GPR Earned		
	FED		
	PRO/PRS		
	SEG/SEG-S		
	TOTAL State Revenues	\$	\$
NET ANNUALIZED FISCAL IMPACT			
		<u>State</u>	<u>Local</u>
NET CHANGE IN COSTS		\$36,142	\$0
NET CHANGE IN REVENUE		\$	\$
Agency/Prepared By		Authorized Signature	Date
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