

Fiscal Estimate Narratives
DOC 10/9/2019

LRB Number 19-1522/1	Introduction Number SB-348	Estimate Type Original
Description restoring the right to vote to certain persons barred from voting as a result of a felony conviction, changing the information required on voter registration forms, and changing voting procedure for certain persons who are convicted of felonies		

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

Under current law, when a person is barred from voting as a result of a felony conviction, that person's right to vote is restored when the person completes his or her sentence, including probation, parole, or extended supervision (unless their right to vote is restored sooner through a pardon).

Under this bill, a person loses his or her right to vote due to a felony conviction only while he or she is incarcerated for that offense, confined as a condition of probation, or incarcerated after revocation of probation, parole, or extended supervision.

This bill requires the Department of Corrections (DOC) to mail to each person on probation, parole, or extended supervision a notice that their right to vote has been restored. Sending a one-time notification to all offenders under DOC supervision when this bill takes effect, whose voting rights would be restored by this bill, would cost approximately \$23,100 (based on the number of felons – 45,225 – on probation, parole, or extended supervision as of June 30, 2019).

The DOC would additionally incur some cost in updating various documents, such as release forms, discharge certificates, and Offender Handbooks, to reflect the bill's changes. To update surplus Offender Handbooks stored in the DOC's Forms Center, the DOC would print addendum pages to include with the handbooks, at a negligible cost. Any surplus Offender Handbooks at Division of Community Corrections (DCC) Field Offices would be updated with addendum pages printed at those offices, at a likely negligible cost. Because future copies of the Offender Handbook would incorporate the bill's changes without the need for addendum pages, this bill would likely have little or no recurring fiscal impact with respect to the handbook. The precise cost of updating other documents to reflect the bill's changes is indeterminate.

Under current law, the DOC is required to inform probationers who are disqualified from voting that they may not vote in any election until their civil rights are restored. The probationer and a witness are required to sign a form provided by the Department. This bill removes this requirement, which would result in a negligible cost saving for the DOC.

This bill also requires the DOC to include in its ongoing training programs a discussion of the bill's changes to voting rights. Correctional Officer Pre-service, Agent Basic Training, continuing education, and written policies would inform current and future staff about the bill's changes. The cost of this additional training would be negligible.

This bill's elimination of the requirement that the DOC provide reports to the Elections Commission would have no fiscal effect on the Department because similar data exchanges would continue, and because this data exchange is enabled and supported by infrastructure and resources shared with other exchanges and applications.

Currently, in order to assist the Elections Commission with verifying whether offenders released to DOC supervision are eligible to vote, the DOC generally has two staff members work on average 3.5 hours of overtime on election nights. By restoring the voting rights of released felons, this bill would allow the DOC to avoid the costs associated with this overtime.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications