

HF477 - 0 - Permanent Absentee Voter List Option

Chief Author: **Dan Wolgamott**
 Committee: **Elections Finance & Policy**
 Date Completed: **1/23/2023 2:53:49 PM**
 Agency: **Secretary of State**

State Fiscal Impact	Yes	No
Expenditures	X	
Fee/Departmental Earnings		X
Tax Revenue		X
Information Technology	X	
Local Fiscal Impact		
	X	

This table shows direct impact to state government only. Local government impact, if any, is discussed in the narrative. Reductions shown in the parentheses.

State Cost (Savings)	Biennium			Biennium		
	Dollars in Thousands	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
General Fund	-	80	16	16	16	
Restrict Misc. Special Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	80	16	16	16	16
Biennial Total			96			32

Full Time Equivalent Positions (FTE)	Biennium			Biennium	
	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
General Fund	-	.4	.1	.1	.1
Restrict Misc. Special Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	.4	.1	.1	.1

LBO Analyst's Comment

I have reviewed this fiscal note for reasonableness of content and consistency with the LBO's Uniform Standards and Procedures.

LBO Signature: Susan Nelson **Date:** 1/23/2023 2:53:49 PM
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State Cost (Savings) Calculation Details

This table shows direct impact to state government only. Local government impact, if any, is discussed in the narrative. Reductions are shown in parentheses.

*Transfers In/Out and Absorbed Costs are only displayed when reported.

State Cost (Savings) = 1-2		Biennium			Biennium	
Dollars in Thousands		FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	FY2027
General Fund	-	80	16	16	16	16
Restrict Misc. Special Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	80	16	16	16	16
	Biennial Total		96	32		
1 - Expenditures, Absorbed Costs*, Transfers Out*						
General Fund	-	80	16	16	16	16
Restrict Misc. Special Revenue						
Expenditures	-	6	-	-	-	-
Absorbed Costs	-	(6)	-	-	-	-
Total	-	80	16	16	16	16
	Biennial Total		96	32		
2 - Revenues, Transfers In*						
General Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-
Restrict Misc. Special Revenue	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Biennial Total		-	-		

Bill Description

House File 477 provides for the creation of a permanent absentee ballot voter list where a voter can request to have a ballot sent to them automatically for every election for which they are eligible. This replaces the current permanent absentee voter list that provides applications for absentee ballots automatically for each election.

Subdivision 1 requires updating the voter registration form both on paper and the electronic version to provide a box to indicate whether a voter wishes to be added to the permanent absentee voter list.

Subdivision 2 updates the current permanent absentee voter status to change it from a status that allowed a voter to receive an absentee application each election to one that allows a voter to receive an absentee ballot automatically for each eligible election. This section further specifies that it does not apply to voters living in jurisdictions that vote completely by mail ballot, as every registered voter in those jurisdictions already receive a mail ballot for each election.

Subdivision 3 removes the requirement that counties mail voters on the permanent absentee voter list applications in a certain time period. Subdivision 4 creates a new timeline for election officials to send absentee ballots to those on the permanent absentee voter list. This timeline requires sending ballots to those voters at the start of voting in every absentee voting period.

Subdivision 5 provides that an absentee ballot board reviewing an absentee ballot returned by a voter may compare the information on the voter’s absentee ballot application or in the voter record for the purpose of accepting absentee ballots. This is necessary because voters on the permanent absentee voter list will not have an application to compare the data on the envelope to, and instead will require comparing against the data in the voter’s record.

Section 6 makes the bill effective July 1, 2024.

Assumptions

Changes will need to be made in the Statewide Voter Registration System to accommodate the changes in House File

477, as well as changes to paper and online voter registration applications. This note assumes that the Office of Secretary of State (OSS) will be able to leverage the existing “Reoccurring AB” flag in SVRS to mark voters for the permanent absentee voter list. Additional development work will be required to facilitate reports removing voters from the permanent absentee voter list due to ineligibility or if the ballot is returned as undeliverable, as well as automating some of the processes for queuing absentee materials and records. This note assumes that any changes to the online voter tools will require translation into the 11 languages served by the OSS, but that those costs would be paid for from the Help America Vote Act funds currently appropriated to the OSS.

Expenditure and/or Revenue Formula

Permanent Absentee Voting Opt-In			
Computing Costs	ED Business Analysis	250 hours	
	OSS IT	300 hours	
	QA	250 hours	
		Total Hours: 800	
		800 hours @ \$100/hour =	\$80,000
Translation Computing Costs	ED Business Analysis	4 hours	
	OSS IT	16 hours	
	QA	16 hours	
		Total Hours: 36 hours	
		36 hours @ \$100/hour =	\$3,600
Translation Costs	Print/Electronic Translations	\$2,000	\$2,000

Long-Term Fiscal Considerations

Ongoing maintenance of 20% per year is assumed related to all development costs.

Local Fiscal Impact

There will be local costs associated with mailing permanent absentee voters an absentee ballot. However, this note assumes those costs will be substantially mitigated by the removal of the current requirement to send permanent absentee voters an absentee ballot application. That application would then presumably be followed by an absentee ballot request, which would require counties send the absentee ballot materials. This legislation removes the requirement of sending the application, removing one step in the permanent absentee voter list process.

References/Sources

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