
Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Secretary of State directives

The bill requires the Secretary of State to issue directives applying to the midday tabulation process prescribed for the March 4 primary election in the counties affected by the bill. These requirements concern:

- who is to serve as the designated agents for ballot delivery;
- the manner for handling the ballots during collection and delivery;
- maintenance of the ballot boxes in each precinct;
- ballot reconciliation with the poll book or poll lists;
- the manner for securing delivery of the voted ballots to the boards of election.

The Secretary of State is likely not to incur new costs for issuing these directives to Cuyahoga County and Van Wert County boards of elections.

Cuyahoga and Van Wert counties' March 4, 2008 primary vote tabulation

The bill permits Cuyahoga County and Van Wert County boards of elections to employ midday tabulation of optical scan ballots for the March 4, 2008 primary election. The bill defines "midday" as between 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The ballots to be counted must be properly sealed in locked containers and delivered to the board of elections by a designated agent. The various other requirements for the transportation of these ballots will be determined by Secretary of State directive, with respect to the requirements listed above. Thus, each county could experience a cost for transporting the ballots from polling places to the boards of elections. Van Wert County has 15 polling places and Cuyahoga County maintains 576. Except for the special procedures applying to Cuyahoga and Van Wert counties for the upcoming primary election, the bill generally prohibits boards of elections from using the central count method of tabulating optical scan ballots.

Over-voting procedures

Another cost to consider relates to counting procedures for over-votes marked on ballots. This would affect all county boards of elections that use optical scan equipment. The bill requires that optical scan ballots with an over-vote on a specific candidate, question, or issue only have that over-voted item invalidated from the ballot. If this would require ballots to be reentered into the central counting equipment, there could be some new ballot processing costs, most likely in the form of additional staff time.

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