Ohio Legislative Service Commission

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Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

Bill: H.B. 250 of the 130th G.A. **Date**: February 14, 2014

Status: As Introduced **Sponsor**: Rep. Becker

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Contents: Reduces the number of days for absent voting

State Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on the state.

Local Fiscal Highlights

- The bill reduces the number of days in which absent voting may be conducted from 35 days to 17 days. Generally, this is likely to reduce costs to county boards of elections for conducting in-person absent voting.
- The scope of the savings that might be realized will depend chiefly on the number of overtime hours that are reduced as a consequence of the bill. Also, county boards of elections that have used alternative absent voter locations in addition to their head offices are likely to see a reduction in costs for operating those locations.

Detailed Fiscal Analysis

The bill shortens the period during which electors may cast absent voter's ballots before an election. Under the bill, absent voter's ballots generally must be ready for use, whether in person or by mail, on the 17th day, instead of the 35th day, before the day of the election. This would reduce the number of in-person absent voter days by 18 days. Consequently, the bill could lower the costs some county boards of elections incur as part of the in-person absent voting process.

The scope of any cost savings that a county board of elections might realize under the bill reduced timeframes in the bill depends on a variety of factors. First, there could be a reduction in staff overtime hours for the 18 days of early absent voting that is eliminated under the bill. Since most county boards of elections are open only during normal business hours during this period, however, any reduction in overtime pay costs as a result of the bill would be small. The second potential source of cost savings applies to county boards of elections that have opted to use an additional early absent voter location other than their main offices. Under the reduced timeframe for absent voting in the bill, these county boards of elections would see a reduction in rent and other operating costs, such as for overtime staffing and security at that additional absent voter location. The Franklin County Board of Elections, for example, paid $93,000 in rent costs for its early voting center location during the November 2012 general election. The board devoted 50 employees to working full-time there during in-person absent voting and hired additional security for that center. Again, however, it should be noted that in the 18 days of early voting that would be eliminated under the bill, that additional absent voter location was only open during normal business hours, and there were no overtime expenses incurred.

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