

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 29, 2003

TO: Honorable Mary Denny, Chair, House Committee on Elections

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB502 by Dutton (Relating to the compensation of an election judge or clerk.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB502, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$1,937,570) through the biennium ending August 31, 2005.

The bill would make no appropriation but could provide the legal basis for an appropriation of funds to implement the provisions of the bill.

General Revenue-Related Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable Net Positive/(Negative) Impact to General Revenue Related Funds
2004	(\$1,937,570)
2005	\$0
2006	(\$1,937,570)
2007	\$0
2008	(\$1,937,570)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from GENERAL REVENUE FUND 1
2004	(\$1,937,570)
2005	\$0
2006	(\$1,937,570)
2007	\$0
2008	(\$1,937,570)

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would amend the Election Code to raise the minimum compensation for election judges and clerks from the federal minimum wage to 1.5 times the federal minimum wage and would require that they be paid within 72 hours after providing documentation that they are entitled to such compensation.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003 and would apply only to compensation for an election judge or clerk for services rendered or training attended on or after that date.

Methodology

Election costs vary among political subdivisions and from year to year. According to the Secretary of

State's Office, the average number of election workers per precinct is four, the average number of hours worked per worker per election is 14, and the average election wage across the state is \$6 per hour. There are 8,473 county voting precincts in the state. All election costs are born by the political subdivision holding the election, except for the primaries, which are conducted at the expense of the state. In fiscal year 2002, the state compensated election workers statewide cumulatively \$3,875,139 for the primary and runoff primary. If compensation had been paid at the rate proposed in the bill, the total compensation would have been \$1,937,570 higher.

The Comptroller of Public Accounts reports that several counties already pay above 1.5 times the federal minimum wage, which is \$5.15 per hour. Using the above averages, the estimated cost increase to local governments combined statewide would be approximately \$820,864 per county-wide election. These figures would increase if and when the federal minimum wage is increased.

The provision in the bill that compensation be paid to election workers within 72 hours after the end of election day could have some financial impact in large political subdivisions where it might be necessary to hire temporary payroll personnel in order to meet this deadline.

Local Government Impact

The fiscal impact would vary by county depending on the number of election workers and the hourly rate the county currently pays the workers. As an example, Bexar County, which currently pays election judges \$7 per hour and election clerks \$6 per hour, would incur an increase of \$34,101 in costs per election. The county also estimates that the requirement to issue compensation within 72 hours would require employment of temporary payroll staff, adding another \$4,200 in costs per election. A county that currently pays the minimum wage would experience a larger increase.

Source Agencies: 304 Comptroller of Public Accounts, 307 Secretary of State

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