

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 78TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 2, 2003

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

FROM: John Keel, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB2279 by Coleman (Relating to allowing certain early voting polling places to serve as election day polling places.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would require an authority that conducts an election using a direct recording electronic (DRE) voting machine and an instant electronic vote verification (VR) system at each polling place to establish an additional election-day polling place at the location of each branch early-voting polling place, other than a moveable branch early-voting polling place. The additional polling place would be required to accommodate voting by a voter from any precinct. The voting system would have to be approved by the secretary of state.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2003 and apply only to an election ordered on or after that date.

The secretary of state estimates the state would incur insignificant costs as a result of additional polling places being made available for a primary election. The state would experience a total additional cost of \$30,300 in each of fiscal years 2004, 2006, and 2008 from the General Revenue Fund. Costs would include \$1,965 for rental of an average of three DREs per additional branch (131 branches for counties that currently use DRE and VR systems x three DREs per branch x \$5 rent per DRE), plus \$28,296 for labor (three additional election workers per branch x 131 branches x 14 hours of labor x \$5.15 per hour). Costs would increase if more counties set up DRE and VR systems.

Counties that would meet the criteria of the bill and would therefore be required to provide additional election-day polling places would incur initial costs for equipment for each additional polling place at a cost of \$2,500 to \$3,000 per DRE, \$1,000 per laptop computer, and an electronic verification system (no cost provided) for each added polling place. Bexar County officials stated that the county would have an additional 28 early voting sites as a result of the provisions of the bill, with eight DREs at each, for a total cost of \$560,000 for the DREs alone.

Bexar County (population 1.39 million), El Paso County (population 679,622), and Victoria County (population 84,088) estimated increased costs as a result of additional election judges and election clerks, supplies, materials, phone lines, transportation costs for additional deliveries to early-voting election-day sites, utility payments at the sites, and staff time for preparing and programming additional DRE units. Bexar County estimates initial costs of \$584,304 and about \$24,000 (roughly \$860 per site) per election thereafter at the current population level. El Paso County estimates initial costs of \$10,000 for personnel for each election, but did not calculate initial equipment costs. Victoria County would have four additional sites with initial equipment costs of \$48,000 (\$12,000 per site) and other costs of at least \$2,000 (\$500 per site).

Local Government Impact

Costs to units of local government are expected to be significant for initial costs of added equipment, supplies, and increased staffing, starting at approximately \$48,000 in a county the size of Victoria and exceeding \$580,000 in a large county. Costs for additional staff, phone lines, and utilities for each

election after the initial purchase of equipment would add costs varying from \$500 per site per election to \$860 per site per election.

Source Agencies: 307 Secretary of State

LBB Staff: JK, GO, MS, DLBa