

**LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD**  
**Austin, Texas**

**FISCAL NOTE, 79TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION**

**April 20, 2005**

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

**FROM:** John S. O'Brien, Deputy Director, Legislative Budget Board

**IN RE: HB768** by Villarreal (Relating to authorizing a county clerk to mail an application to vote by mail to all voters who are 65 years of age or older.), **As Introduced**

**No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.**

The bill would amend the Election Code to allow a county commissioners court to authorize the county clerk to send by mail, an application to vote by mail, to each person in the county who is 65 years of age or older and is eligible to vote. The secretary of state would be required to prescribe the form of an application to be used. The bill would take effect September 1, 2005.

**Local Government Impact**

Although the county clerk is not the election official in each county, it is assumed for the purposes of this fiscal analysis that the bill would apply to every county, regardless of who handles election responsibilities.

The fiscal impact would vary by county depending on how many eligible voters 65 years of age or older reside in the county, as well as the overall size of the county and its budget.

For example, Harris County (population of 3.4 million and annual county budget of nearly \$1.2 billion) reports that there are approximately 250,000 registered voters in the county who are age 65 or older. Assuming a 75 percent response rate on applications, the annual cost to the county would range from approximately \$3 million to \$3.3 million from fiscal year 2006 to fiscal year 2010 to mail out applications and, upon request, ballots. These amounts would have an insignificant fiscal impact for Harris County. However, Tom Green County (population of 104,010 and budget for county clerk's office of \$128,000) estimates an annual cost of \$5,720, which would be considered a moderate fiscal impact to the county clerk's office.

The County and District Clerks Association estimates that the fiscal impact would be insignificant for the majority of counties.

**Source Agencies:** 307 Secretary of State

**LBB Staff:** JOB, JB, NR, DLBa