

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 20, 2009

TO: Honorable Todd Smith, Chair, House Committee on Elections

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

IN RE: HB1780 by Hochberg (Relating to the use of a driver's license or identification card issued by the Department of Public Safety in voter registration.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB1780, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$7,441,752) through the biennium ending August 31, 2011.

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
2010	(\$5,050,376)
2011	(\$2,391,376)
2012	(\$2,391,376)
2013	(\$2,391,376)
2014	(\$2,391,376)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from General Revenue Fund 1	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2009
2010	(\$5,050,376)	58.0
2011	(\$2,391,376)	58.0
2012	(\$2,391,376)	58.0
2013	(\$2,391,376)	58.0
2014	(\$2,391,376)	58.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would allow individuals who apply for, renew, or update their driver's license or identification card at the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to automatically become a registered voter unless the individual is not eligible or declines to register to vote.

The bill would transfer the acceptance and processing of voter registration applications from the county voter registrars to the Secretary of State (SOS). The bill also requires SOS to register all eligible persons who have been issued a driver's license or identification card by DPS.

The bill would require the DPS and SOS to develop printed materials and a public service announcement to inform the public about automatic voter registration.

The bill would require the personal identification certificate fee to be waived for individuals who are eligible to register to vote.

The bill would repeal Sections 12.005, 12.006, Subchapter B, Chapter 12, and Subchapter B, Chapter 13 of the Election Code.

The bill would be effective September 1, 2009 except for certain sections would be effective immediately if a vote of two-thirds is received.

Methodology

It is assumed that the Secretary of State would require 58 new employees in order to process voter registration applications at a cost of \$1,554,310 per fiscal year for salaries and wages and \$444,066 per fiscal year for benefits out of General Revenue. In addition, one-time costs of \$569,000 for equipment such as computers, scanners, desks, and telephones in fiscal year 2010 and on-going costs of \$261,000 per fiscal year would be needed. It is also assumed that postage to mail rejection letters would cost \$132,000 per fiscal year. In addition, one-time programming costs of \$90,000 in fiscal year 2010 would be needed.

The bill would require the Department of Public Safety and the Secretary of State (SOS) to develop printed materials and a public service announcement to inform the public about automatic voter registration. SOS estimates that this would cost \$2 million out of General Revenue Funds for fiscal year 2010.

Although there could be a revenue loss from the prohibition to collect a fee for a personal identification certificate issued to a person who is eligible to register to vote, it is unknown how many people would make the request, and therefore unknown the amount of revenue loss that would occur.

Local Government Impact

The bill would transfer certain duties as defined by the provisions of the bill from the local voter registrar to the Secretary of State (SOS). Under the provisions of the bill, local governmental entities could experience a significant savings resulting from the transfer of the voter applications process, and storage of voter applications.

Source Agencies: 307 Secretary of State, 405 Department of Public Safety

LBB Staff: JOB, TP, MS, BTA, LG, DB