

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 81ST LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 29, 2009

TO: Honorable Patrick M. Rose, Chair, House Committee on Human Services

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

IN RE: HB4389 by Farias (Relating to the Health and Human Services Commission's authority to combine applications for benefits with a voter registration application.), **As Introduced**

Estimated Two-year Net Impact to General Revenue Related Funds for HB4389, As Introduced: a negative impact of (\$984,410) 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	(\$327,663)
2011	(\$656,747)
2012	(\$656,747)
2013	(\$656,747)
2014	(\$656,747)

All Funds, Five-Year Impact:

Fiscal Year	Probable (Cost) from <i>General Revenue Fund</i> 1	Probable (Cost) from <i>Federal Funds</i> 555	Change in Number of State Employees from FY 2009
2010	(\$327,663)	(\$331,619)	9.0
2011	(\$656,747)	(\$664,676)	17.0
2012	(\$656,747)	(\$664,676)	17.0
2013	(\$656,747)	(\$664,676)	17.0
2014	(\$656,747)	(\$664,676)	17.0

Fiscal Analysis

The bill would amend Chapter 20 of the Election Code to add Section 20.010 which would direct the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to prescribe and require use by all HHS agencies forms and procedures that combine each application for health and human services (HHS) benefits with an official voter registration application form.

The bill also would require the use of a form and procedure that combines HHS and voter registration functions for reported changes of address by HHS recipients. The form must allow the recipient to indicate if the change of address is to be used for voter registration purposes. The bill would require the secretary of state to approve the design, content and physical characteristics of these forms. The forms must include a statement in a prominent place that it is illegal for individuals who are not United States citizens to register to vote.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2009.

Methodology

HHSC has fifteen different forms that would need to be updated with the voter registration form. The agency would develop the materials during fiscal year 2010, with implementation on March 1, 2010. The number of voter registration actions that are estimated by HHSC (1.1 million in the second half of fiscal year 2010 and 2.2 million in fiscal year 2011) would require an increase in agency staff to process the forms. The agency based its estimates on the current number of application or recertification actions per month, with certain adjustments. The number of full-time equivalents required would be 9.0 in fiscal year 2010 and 17.0 in each subsequent fiscal year. The costs for salaries and benefits would be \$0.3 million in fiscal year 2010 and \$0.5 million in each subsequent fiscal year.

In addition, the agency estimates an increase in printing costs for the various eligibility forms of \$0.2 million in fiscal year 2010 and \$0.4 million in each subsequent fiscal year. The agency assumes that 50% of the requests for an address change will not be on the form for reporting such changes, and instead would be requested by phone or in-person. In these instances, the agency would mail a voter registration form at a cost of \$0.50 each for a total cost of \$0.2 million in fiscal year 2010 and \$0.4 million in each subsequent fiscal year. All costs are assumed to be matched at a 50.3% federal funds rate, to conform with HHSC's current public assistance cost allocation plan for fiscal year 2009.

It is assumed that the agency can absorb the cost (estimated to be \$33,000) of automation changes to the TIERS self-service portal to add the voter registration page to the online application form.

There may be additional costs related to forms at other health and human services agencies, which are not reflected in this cost estimate. The Secretary of State indicates that review and approval of the forms can be absorbed within existing resources.

Local Government Impact

Local voter registrars may be affected by provisions of the bill which seek to increase voter registration.

Source Agencies: 307 Secretary of State, 529 Health and Human Services Commission

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