

Fiscal Estimate Narratives

GAB 10/9/2013

LRB Number	13-3066/1	Introduction Number	AB-0396	Estimate Type	Original
Description Absentee voting at residential care facilities					

Assumptions Used in Arriving at Fiscal Estimate

This fiscal estimate is identical to that submitted for 2013 SB 297, except for the specific sample estimates incorporated at the conclusion of this estimate. This bill would require local election officials to dispatch special voting deputies (SVDs) to certain adult-care facilities to conduct absentee voting instead of allowing discretion in determining whether to dispatch SVDs to those facilities. The facilities where such absentee voting would be required, upon the request of an absentee voter, include adult family homes, community-based residential facilities, and residential care apartment complexes. The requirement would not apply, however, to such facilities in which less than five registered electors are occupants.

The State currently licenses 1568 adult family homes, 1514 community-based residential facilities, and 309 residential care apartment complexes. Because the bill makes it mandatory to conduct absentee voting via SVDs at some of these facilities where it is currently optional, some increase in local costs are anticipated, in the form of wages for local clerks and SVDs to correctly administer the new provisions. However, several factors make it difficult to estimate the local fiscal impact.

First, there is no statewide data reflecting the number of such adult-care facilities which are currently and consistently served by SVDs despite the fact that less than five registered voters are occupants, and therefore the increase in the number of facilities that would be served cannot be calculated. Second, the number of registered voters in individual facilities constantly fluctuates, making it impossible to calculate the effect of the exception based on the existence of five registered voters at specific facilities. Under both existing law and the proposed bill, the assumption is made that local election officials may simply choose to dispatch SVDs to conduct absentee voting at the facilities upon receiving one request for an absentee ballot, regardless of the total number of registered voters who are occupants of the facility. Finally, wages for local election officials and SVDs are established at the local level and vary widely across municipalities.

The Government Accountability Board has received estimates of the anticipated local fiscal impact of the bill from two municipalities. The City of Sun Prairie anticipates that the bill would require its SVDs to serve an additional four facilities at a cost of \$380 per election, or \$1,520 during a calendar year consisting of four regular elections.

The City of Appleton advised that the bill would require that SVDs conduct absentee voting at up to 22 additional facilities where it is currently optional and which SVDs currently do not serve, assuming that a request is received from at least one resident and the threshold of five registered voters is met. The City pays each SVD \$50 per visit, and SVDs typically must make two or three visits per facility to reach all electors who have requested an absentee ballot. The City of Appleton would expect an increase of between \$1,100 and \$3,300 per election, depending upon the number of requests received from residents of the additional facilities and the number of SVD visits required to complete absentee voting. The annual increase during a calendar year consisting of four regular elections would range between \$4,400 and \$12,200.

Long-Range Fiscal Implications