

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 4259
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
219th LEGISLATURE

DATED: AUGUST 21, 2020

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Extends ballot receipt and election certification deadlines; increases certain messenger and bearer ballot limits.
- Type of Impact:** Potential expenditure increase to local government funds.
- Agencies Affected:** Offices of the County Clerk.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
Local Cost Increase	Indeterminate		

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) finds this bill may result in additional costs to counties for the requirements that the county clerk notify ballot applicants regarding signature defects on applications for a mail-in ballot within 24 hours of the determination of a ballot disapproval.
- The bill may also result in additional costs to counties for preparing and furnishing ballots for municipal elections.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill extends ballot receipt and election certification deadlines and increases certain messenger and bearer ballot limits. An authorized messenger is a person who is designated by a voter to perform certain functions on the voter’s behalf, such as apply for and obtain a mail-in ballot. A bearer is a person who is designated by a voter to mail or transport a mail-in ballot on the voter’s behalf. Under current law, a person may serve as an authorized messenger or bearer for up to three qualified voters. As amended, the bill would permit a person to serve as an authorized messenger or bearer for up to five qualified voters who are immediate family members residing in the same household as the messenger or bearer.

The bill establishes an alternative way to cure signature defects on applications for a mail-in ballot by requiring notification to the applicant within 24 hours of the determination of disapproval. Under the bill, the notice must state the specific reasons for the disapproval and inform the applicant of the opportunity to challenge the disapproval by contacting the county clerk's office.

This bill provides that the county clerk would be responsible for preparing and furnishing ballots for municipal elections. The bill also extends certain deadlines for the certification of election results by the municipal clerk, the meeting of the board of county canvassers, and the transmission of the statement of the canvass or other statements to the Secretary of State

This bill extends the deadline by which mail-in ballots bearing a post mark of the day of the election must be received by the county board of elections in order to be canvassed from 48 hours after the closing of the polls to 144 hours after the closing of the polls. The bill also eliminates the requirement that a mail-in ballot bear a post mark, provided that the ballot is delivered by the United States Postal Service within 48 hours after the closing of the polls.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The bill may result in additional costs to counties for the requirement that the county clerk notify ballot applicants regarding signature defects on applications for a mail-in ballot within 24 hours of the determination of a ballot disapproval. Also, the bill may result in additional costs to counties for the requirement that the county clerk prepare and furnish ballots for municipal elections.

Section: *State Government*

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Approved: *Frank W. Haines III*
 Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).