

# LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

**ASSEMBLY, No. 4320**

## **STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE**

DATED: AUGUST 26, 2020

### **SUMMARY**

- Synopsis:** Requires certain information to increase public awareness and use of voting by mail; prohibits rejection of mail-in ballots for certain defects; requires certain mail-in ballots to be retained.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure increase. Potential local expenditure increases. Revenue increase to local governments for costs reimbursable by the State.
- Agencies Affected:** Division of Elections, Department of State; county boards of elections.

#### **Office of Legislative Services Estimate**

| <b>Fiscal Impact</b>          | <b><u>Year 1</u></b> | <b><u>Year 2</u></b> | <b><u>Year 3</u></b> |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>State Cost Increase</b>    |                      | Indeterminate        |                      |
| <b>Local Cost Increase</b>    |                      | Indeterminate        |                      |
| <b>Local Revenue Increase</b> |                      | Indeterminate        |                      |

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) has been informed by the Division of Elections that it is currently working on, but has not yet completed, a fiscal estimate of the bill’s requirement that the Secretary of State prepare a voter information notice that illustrates and promotes the use of voting by mail, including the description of the vote-by-mail process, and to distribute copies of the poster to the county boards. The State will be required to pay for these costs.
- The division indicates that the provisions directing the Secretary of State to prepare educational materials for employees of county boards of elections that provide clear information regarding the standards for acceptance and rejection of mail-in ballots and the safe-keeping of all materials in the case of rejection would not result in any cost increase, as this information would be included among other educational materials that the division issues on a regular basis.
- The division indicates that the provision in the bill that requires the Secretary of State to inform the voter that the status of the voter’s mail-in ballot may be checked using the free-access system would not increase costs to the Secretary of State.

## **BILL DESCRIPTION**

This bill requires certain information to increase public awareness and use of voting by mail, prohibits rejection of any mail-in ballot if noncompliance is attributable to physical defects outside the control of the voter, and requires certain mail-in ballots to be retained.

Under the bill, the Secretary of State is required to:

- (1) Prepare informational posters for use at all polling places that promote voting by mail;
- (2) Include with mail-in ballots information for the voter on how to check the status of the voter's mail-in ballot; and
- (3) Provide educational materials to county board of elections employees on the standards for acceptance and rejection of mail-in ballots.

Under current law, county boards of elections are required to retain voted mail-in ballots for a period of two years. This bill clarifies that ballots that are deemed invalid are also required to be retained for two years.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

### ***EXECUTIVE BRANCH***

None received.

### ***OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES***

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