

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2005

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 88 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Electoral Fairness Act.

SPONSOR(S): Representative Miller

FISCAL IMPACT

Yes () No (X) No Estimate Available ()

FY 2005-06 FY 2006-07 FY 2007-08 FY 2008-09 FY 2009-10

REVENUES

EXPENDITURES

POSITIONS (cumulative):

PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: State Board of Elections,
County Boards of Elections

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2006 and applies to all primaries and elections held after that date.

BILL SUMMARY:

This bill amends G.S. §§ 163-96(a) and 163-97 by (1) reducing the number of votes required to qualify as a political party and to maintain that status to 2% of the votes cast in any statewide election (current requirement is 10% of the votes cast for Governor and presidential electors) and (2) by reducing the number of signatures required to achieve political party status to 0.5% (current requirement is 2%) of the total number of voters. The bill also amends G.S. § 163-98 to provide that a new political party must certify its candidates to the State Board of Elections no later than May 1 (now July 1) preceding the general election. It amends G.S. § 163-122(a)(1) to require that, to be placed on the ballot, an unaffiliated candidate must present a petition with signatures of 0.5% of voters who voted in the most recent election for Governor and at least 200 voters from each of four congressional districts. The bill applies to elections held after January 1, 2006.

Source: Adopted from the 2/7/2005 Bill Digest for H.B. 88.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

The Fiscal Research Division estimates that this bill will have little to no fiscal impact on the State Board of Elections or the county boards of elections. Currently, county boards of elections must verify the validity of petition signatures obtained by groups seeking political party status and by unaffiliated candidates seeking ballot access. This bill would reduce the number of signatures required for a group of voters to achieve political party status and for an unaffiliated candidate to achieve ballot access. The reduction in the number of signatures required for ballot access may result in an increase in the number of petitions that are submitted. However, the State Board of Elections has automated the petition process such that petitions can be checked through the Statewide Election Information Management System (SEIMS - a suite of applications that automates voter registration and greatly simplifies the administration of voter records). Thus, the cost of processing any additional petitions that may be submitted is expected to be insignificant to the county boards as well as to the State Board. Further, the cost of adding names to ballots is expected to be insignificant as well.

SOURCES OF DATA: State Board of Elections

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

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DATE: March 8, 2005



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