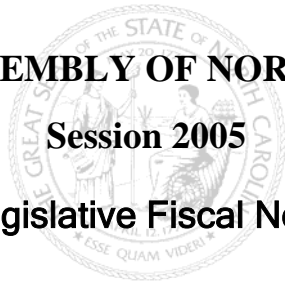


GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA



Session 2005

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 851 (Second Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Same Day Reg. at One-Stop Sites.

SPONSOR(S): Representatives McComas, Holliman, Ross, and Parmon

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes (X)	No ()	No Estimate Available ()		
	<u>FY 2005-06</u>	<u>FY 2006-07</u>	<u>FY 2007-08</u>	<u>FY 2008-09</u>	<u>FY 2009-10</u>
REVENUES					
EXPENDITURES					
State Board	\$175,000				
	to \$200,000 NR				
County Boards			No Estimate Available/See Assumptions & Methodology		
POSITIONS (cumulative):					
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & State Board of Elections/County Boards of Elections					
PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED:					
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2006, except that the appropriation is effective July 1, 2005					

BILL SUMMARY: This bill would allow residents of a county to register to vote at a one-stop (early voting) site in that county and then vote at the site immediately. Under existing law, residents of NC must apply to register 25 days before an election to be able to vote in that election. The only people who are allowed to register after the 25-day deadline and still vote in the election are people who become naturalized citizens after the deadline, felons whose citizenship is restored after the deadline, and military and certain other people serving their country overseas.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

Electronic Access:

Section 1 of this bill would allow in-person registration followed by immediate voting at one-stops sites. To facilitate in-person registration and voting, Section 1 of the bill also requires the State Board of Elections and the county boards of elections to provide, to the maximum extent possible, electronic access to an updated statewide voter registration database and the North Carolina drivers license database at each site where in-person registration and voting take place.

The State Board of Elections maintains the State Election Information Management System (SEIMS), which is a suite of applications that automates voter registration and greatly simplifies the administration of voter records. The State Board reported that county board offices are connected to SEIMS now and that they can search their county data now. Their connection to SEIMS also allows them to access to the drivers license database. One-stop sites that are operated at the county board offices have the electronic access that is necessary for processing in-person registrations. A number of counties, however, operate multiple one-stop sites. Not all of those one-stop sites are able to obtain a reliable connection from the site to the respective county office. Therefore, to support in-person registration at those one-stop sites, the State Board would develop a simplified process flow and SEIMS application that would allow a site to operate without telecommunication connection. The application would support the transfer of data onto laptops or personal computers that can be taken to the one-stop sites as well as software to operate on the laptops or personal computers. The State Boards estimates the cost for the implementation of the simplified process flow and SEIMS application to be \$175,000 to \$200,000.

Staffing:

Section 1 of the bill requires the county boards to staff the one-stop sites where in-person registration will take place with personnel capable of using the equipment to conduct in-person registration and voting with competency and integrity. The State Board estimates that it would take one to two additional staff at each one-stop site to handle the in-person registrations. Fiscal Research cannot concur with the State Board's estimate. First, we have no data on the number of in-person registrations that are expected. Secondly, it is reasonable to believe that allowing in-person registrations may shift how registrations occur but will not necessarily increase the number of registrations. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that county boards may be able to shift staffing resources from processing regular registrations to working the one-stop sites where in-person registration is allowed. We believe experience with the bill will help determine whether and to what extent additional staffing is needed to process in-person registrations.

SOURCES OF DATA: State Board of Elections

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

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Signed Copy Located in the NCGA Principal Clerk's Offices