

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

Session 2011

Legislative Fiscal Note

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 689 (First Edition)

SHORT TITLE: Online Voter Registration.

SPONSOR(S): Representatives Faison and K. Alexander

FISCAL IMPACT					
	Yes (X)	No ()	No Estimate Available ()		
	<u>FY 2011-12</u>	<u>FY 2012-13</u>	<u>FY 2013-14</u>	<u>FY 2014-15</u>	<u>FY 2015-16</u>
REVENUES					
EXPENDITURES					
Highway Fund					
<i>-Division of Motor Vehicles</i>					
-Driver's License System Upgrades	\$156,800				
-DMV/County Boards of Election Information Sharing			Costs Cannot be Determined: See Assumptions and Methodology		
Local Government:					
- County Board of Elections			Costs Cannot Be Determined: See Assumptions and Methodology		
POSITIONS (cumulative):					
PRINCIPAL DEPARTMENT(S) & PROGRAM(S) AFFECTED: State Board of Elections, Division of Motor Vehicles					
EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 2011					

BILL SUMMARY:

Section 1 of H689 amends G.S. 163-82.3(a) to provide for an online application form for voter registration that may either be printed out online or filled out online to be printed for mailing. The section requires that the form also be allowed to be saved by the user, provided they have the appropriate software. The site should also provide that addresses of county board of elections be available for download.

Section 2 of H689 amends Article 7A of G.S. 173 to provide for online voter registration and for changes of address over a secure web connection. Only individuals that are eligible to vote and possess a valid North Carolina Driver's License or Special Identification Card for Non-Operators would be eligible to use the online process. The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will be required to verify that the individual's information submitted matches information within their database. If the information on the registration or change of address from matches DMV information, it shall be considered valid and sent to the relevant county board of elections under a procedure established by the State Board of Elections. The DMV will also be required to send the digital signature to the county boards of elections. If DMV cannot match the information in their database with information contained on the online form, the application will be sent back to the relevant county board of elections and cannot be processed. The county board of elections will be required to send the applicant a letter and an email (if an email address has been provided) notifying them that their application cannot be processed.

ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODOLOGY:

State Board of Elections

The State Board of Elections (SBOE) estimates no additional costs for undertaking Section 1 of this bill. SBOE has currently developed and is testing a site that will allow forms to be filled out and printed out from a website. For Section 2, the SBOE estimates no additional costs. According to the SBOE, their existing e-forms site will allow for the functionality required of this bill. The State Board of Elections has expended \$300,000 for the online voter registration system and site. The SBOE estimates that existing staff and software licenses will be adequate to meet the requirements of this bill. Fiscal Research concurs with this estimate. The test site for the online voter form is available here:

<http://state-nc.connect3.clarityelections.com/connect/site/publicpages/GenericForm.jsp?gid=11>.

Division of Motor Vehicles:

The Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) was not able to provide an estimate for the costs of this bill without some clarification of the process that is to be used for online registration. However, using past information, Fiscal Research has determined that it could potentially cost \$156,800 for FY 2011-12. An interface between the State Board of Elections (SBOE) database and DMV's State Automated Driver License System (SADLS) would be required. DMV could not provide an estimated completion date for development of the interface for both the current application and the New Generation Driver License System (NGDLS) under implementation. Per the January 1, 2012 effective date, interfaces must be developed for each platform. Additionally, a "code freeze" may be imposed for NGDLS implementation, thereby restricting the number of changes that can be implemented. Consequently, integration of the SBOE interface into the NCGLS may extend beyond the January 2012 timeframe. DMV projects a total of 1760 hours of contractual labor for SADLS adjustments (\$131,800) and 250 hours for NGDLS adjustments (\$25,000). Total contractual programming costs are estimated at \$156,800.

Additional costs would also be incurred. The DMV must reconcile information submitted by applicants with that in SADLS, in addition to sending all relevant information to the county boards of elections. Information sent to county boards of elections must include the digital signature

obtained through the license process, for approved applications. DMV estimates regarding impacts on staffing and associated costs are not available. Additionally, DMV would also have to notify county boards of elections regarding those applicants whose information could not be confirmed. Estimates could not be provided for this function.

County Boards of Elections:

The county boards of elections would have to notify applicants in that county regarding an application that could not be confirmed by DMV. The costs associated with this process cannot be determined as of this time. Additionally, the county boards of elections could potentially incur some costs associated with providing individuals with registration confirmed by the DMV. However, as this process would be developed by the SBOE, costs cannot be determined as of this time.

SOURCES OF DATA: Division of Motor Vehicles and the State Board of Elections

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS: None

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