

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended, Be Printed Engrossed, and Be Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference
Vote:	7 - 1 - 0
Yeas:	Edwards C., Garrard, Gelser, Jenson, Nolan, Read, Roblan
Nays:	Berger
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Jerry Watson, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/3, 6/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires Secretary of State to reimburse each county clerk for necessary expenses relating to state measures and state offices included on the ballot in a primary and general election. Allows counties the option to pay for all or part of excess postage for ballots mailed to a county that exceeds the cost of postage for mail that weights one ounce or less. Specifies that counties should notify the public of the excess cost of postage for mail weighing more than one ounce. Takes effect on January 1, 2013.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Support by statewide county clerks association
- Intention of the Secretary of State's office to convene a work group to develop a new way for the state, counties, cities and special districts to share the costs of conducting elections, with recommendations brought to the legislature in 2010 or 2011.
- State's portion of statewide ballots are approximately 60 percent to 75 percent of postage costs, approximately \$5.5 million, in the 2008 election cycle
- Opposition to proposed amendment which specified that all expenses incurred for a city election would have been paid by the city and that would have required the Secretary of State to designate a formula for the apportionment of expenses; currently, only special elections held by a city must be paid for by the city

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Removes the requirement that the State pay an apportioned share of excess postage on ballots. Allows counties the option to pay for all or part of excess postage for ballots mailed to a county that exceeds the cost of postage for mail that weights one ounce or less. Specifies that counties should notify the public of the excess cost of postage for mail weighing more than one ounce. Takes effect on January 1, 2013.

BACKGROUND: Oregon is a vote by mail state. Although ballots may be deposited in one of the official ballot drop sites, if the ballot is mailed back, postage is required. The amount of postage required by the U.S. Post Office is based on weight and size of envelopes. Sometimes, the length of the ballot increases the overall weight of a return ballot envelope to the point that it will require more than a standard single stamp. Not including sufficient postage may result in a ballot being returned to the elector for insufficient postage. In that case, an elector's ballot will not be counted unless it is returned to the elector early enough to allow re-mailing with proper postage or delivery to a ballot drop site. Currently there is confusion surrounding a county's authority to pay excess postage costs. House Bill 3240-A seeks to provide clarity on the issue.