

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: SB 1586 - 1

78th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2016 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Measure Description:

Directs public universities and community colleges to increase voter registration access and information, requires Secretary of State to provide postage-paid return envelopes with ballots.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Counties, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Secretary of State

Local Government Mandate:

This bill does not affect local governments' service levels or shared revenues sufficient to trigger Section 15, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

Analysis:

The fiscal impact of this measure is indeterminate, because the number and frequency of statewide and county elections vary, and the impact of the measure on the number of ballots mailed is unknown.

As amended by the -1 amendment, the bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS) to ensure that an official ballot drop box is located within one mile of institutions of higher education. The bill also requires the state to pay for and send a postage-paid envelope with all ballots mailed in which voters could return their voted ballots via USPS. Additional requirements of public institutions of higher education, which become effective on July 1, 2017, include a requirement to display a link to the SOS online voter registration website, permit student government to provide voter registration services using any available public space on the schools' property, and provide student government with contact information for school faculty which permit voter registration classroom presentations. If a public institution of higher education operates student housing then at least three months prior to each primary or general election the school is required to obtain address requirements from the local county elections office in order for students living in on-campus housing to receive election ballots; and this information must also be made available to schools student government or its equivalent.

The majority of the direct fiscal impacts associate with this bill will be incurred by the SOS as a result of requiring the state to pay postage for all statewide or local elections. The SOS will setup a Business Reply Mail (BRM) account with the USPS and print and distribute postage-paid envelopes to the counties for insertion with all ballots. Cost estimates to the SOS are estimated to total \$170,000 in the 2015-17 biennium and \$1,840,000 in the 2017-19 biennium. Fiscal estimates are based on a maximum ballot weight of 1oz, at a cost of \$1.077 per envelope. The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that this estimate does not include costs associated with local elections administered by the counties. Additionally, fiscal estimates are based on historic numbers of ballots cast by mail; this analysis does not account for any possible increase in the number of mailed ballots that may result from providing postage-paid envelopes with the ballots.

The fiscal impacts, associated with this legislation, to counties, community colleges, and public universities is anticipated to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgetary parameters.