



**SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
**STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT**  
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**Bill Number:** S. 0100 Introduced on January 10, 2017  
**Author:** Scott  
**Subject:** Early voting procedures  
**Requestor:** Senate Judiciary  
**RFA Analyst(s):** Kokolis and Heineman  
**Impact Date:** May 19, 2017 - Updated for Additional Agency Response

**Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

	<b>FY 2017-18</b>	<b>FY 2018-19</b>
<b>State Expenditure</b>		
General Fund	\$1,000,000	\$0
Other and Federal	\$0	\$0
Full-Time Equivalent Position(s)	0.00	0.00
<b>State Revenue</b>		
General Fund	\$0	\$0
Other and Federal	\$0	\$0
<b>Local Expenditure</b>	Undetermined	\$0
<b>Local Revenue</b>	\$0	\$0

**Fiscal Impact Summary**

This bill will have an expenditure impact on the General Fund of \$1,000,000 in FY 2017-18 and \$500,000 each fiscal year thereafter. Nonrecurring Election Commission expenditures of \$500,000 in FY 2017-18 are for voter education, training election officials, revision of current policies, and development of instructions and procedures for early voting. After the initial election with early voting, costs for voter education and training of election officials would be managed within the Election Commission’s existing resources. Recurring Election Commission expenditures of \$500,000 in FY 2017-18 and each year after reimburses poll managers for early voting activities. The expenditure impact on local government is undetermined because available information is not sufficient to support a conclusion. This fiscal impact statement is updated for additional responses from the Election Commission and local governments.

**Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

**Introduced on January 10, 2017**

**Updated for Additional Agency Response**

**State Expenditure**

This bill directs the authorities charged with conducting elections to establish a procedure by which a qualified elector may cast his ballot, without excuse, during an early voting period for all elections. Each county board of registration and elections must establish at least one early voting center, and may establish up to three. A county board of registration and elections may authorize an additional two centers, if the board finds there is a need after a public hearing on the matter. The early voting period begins ten days before an election and ends three days prior to the election. These early voting provisions do not apply to presidential preference primaries held by

political parties. The executive director of the Election Commission is required to enter a designation that a voter cast an absentee ballot on the master file of qualified electors. This fiscal impact statement has been updated to reflect additional responses from the Election Commission and local governments.

**Election Commission.** The commission indicates this bill will have an expenditure impact to the General Fund of \$1,000,000 in FY 2017-18. Of this amount, \$500,000 is a recurring expense and \$500,000 is for nonrecurring costs.

Nonrecurring expenditures of \$500,000 are for voter education, training election officials, revision of current policies, and development of instructions and procedures for early voting. The cost of these activities is below.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Cost</b>
County Election Official Training	\$20,000
Revision of Poll Manager Handbook	\$65,000
Develop Poll Manager training materials	\$10,000
Online Poll Manager training	\$15,000
Newspaper Advertising	\$90,000
Radio Advertising	\$75,000
Television Advertising	\$190,000
Commission Handbook Revision	\$3,000
Posters	\$7,000
Brochures	\$10,000
Website Revision and Social Media	\$15,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

The Election Commission indicates most of these costs would be incurred leading up to the first statewide election after the law is effective. Costs to train county election officials and for public awareness after that would be managed within the agency’s existing resources.

Recurring expenditures of \$500,000 would be needed to reimburse poll managers for operating early voting centers for seven days. The expenditure would be incurred each fiscal year, because statewide primaries and runoffs are held in different fiscal years than the general election. The commission’s recurring costs estimate was calculated by, first, determining the number of early voting centers needed based upon the number of registered voters in each county. The commission estimated one early voting center for every 50,000 registered voters, up to five centers per county. This calculation produced an estimate of approximately 87 early voting sites statewide.

The commission then estimated the number of early voters on a daily basis, by assuming forty percent of the registered voters would cast early ballots and dividing that number by the seven days the early voting centers would be open.

Then, based upon Section 7-13-72, the commission figured three poll managers for the first 500 registered voters and another three poll managers for each additional 500 registered voters and portion thereof. This calculation produced an estimate of approximately 1,100 poll managers needed to conduct early voting across the state. Finally, the commission calculated the bill's recurring cost by multiplying the number of poll managers by an average daily rate of pay of \$67.50.

The amounts discussed above are for a statewide general election and associated primaries and runoffs. The bill requires establishment of a procedure to allow early voting for all elections. Consequently, the expenditure impact reported above may increase for special elections held for seats in Congress or the General Assembly. However, the commission indicates most of these special elections would require only one early voting site in the voter registration office. Based on this premise, any additional expenditures for special elections are not expected to be significant. Any such additional cost would be funded with candidate filing fees and funds remaining after a general election and associated primary and runoff.

This statement is updated for additional detail from the commission regarding the agency's estimation of the expenditure impact.

#### **State Revenue**

N/A

#### **Local Expenditure**

The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office contacted twenty-three county governments and the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) regarding the expenditure impact of this bill. Municipalities bear the cost of municipal primaries, runoffs and elections, but the MASC has not provided an estimate of expenditures at this time. Three counties responded with information in addition to that provided by the Election Commission.

Charleston County based its estimate on its experience with the 2016 presidential election, which the county describes as essentially the same as what this bill requires. The county opened three locations during October to November 2016, paying \$6,000 in rent for one and using the other two free. In addition to the cost of facilities, the county bought thirty voting machines for \$1,000 each, and spent approximately \$1,700 on signs, advertising, and supplies. The county also hired fifty temporary employees at a cost of approximately \$110,000. In total, the county reported costs of approximately \$148,000, without expenses for security, voting machine delivery, and routers, which other government agencies and departments provided without charge.

Lancaster County did not estimate an amount but cited the same areas of cost as Charleston County with an indication the county expected the cost to be significant. Lancaster County indicated additional voting machines would be required, unless early tabulation of votes was allowed. Otherwise, those voting machines in early voting locations may not be available for deployment on election day. Oconee County estimated a smaller impact of \$2,000 every two years for personnel costs.

Because few local governments responded, the bill's expenditure impact on local government is undetermined. This impact statement is updated for information received from the three responding counties.

**Local Revenue**

N/A

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**State Expenditure**

This bill directs the Election Commission to establish a procedure by which a qualified elector may cast his ballot, without excuse, during an early voting period for all elections. Each county board of registration and elections must establish at least one early voting center, and may establish up to three early voting centers. A county board of registration and elections may authorize an additional two stations, if the board finds there is a need after a public hearing on the matter. The early voting period begins ten days before an election and ends three days prior to the election.

**Election Commission.** The department indicates this bill will have an expenditure impact to the General Fund of \$1,000,000 in FY 2017-18. Nonrecurring expenditures of \$500,000 in FY 2017-18 are needed for voter education, training election officials, revision of current policies, and to develop instructions and procedures for early voting. Recurring expenditures of \$500,000 in FY 2017-18 and each year after are needed for poll manager reimbursement for operating the polling station.

**State Revenue**

N/A

**Local Expenditure**

The local expenditure impact is pending, contingent upon a response from local governments.

**Local Revenue**

N/A



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Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director