



**SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE**  
**STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT**  
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*This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.*

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<b>Bill Number:</b>	H. 3822	Introduced on February 2, 2021
<b>Author:</b>	Cobb-Hunter	
<b>Subject:</b>	Voting	
<b>Requestor:</b>	House Judiciary	
<b>RFA Analyst(s):</b>	Miller and Gardner	
<b>Impact Date:</b>	April 22, 2021	

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### **Fiscal Impact Summary**

This bill will result in an increase of \$6,300,000 in General Fund expenditures for FY 2021-22, including \$300,000 in non-recurring expenditures for software updates and updates to the voting training materials and \$6,000,000 in recurring expenditures to mail each active elector a ballot in each statewide election. Additionally, this bill will result in an increase of \$6,000,000 beginning in FY 2022-23 to mail each active elector a ballot in each statewide election. This bill will have no expenditure impact on the Department of Corrections (SCDC) and The Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services (DPPPS) as all activities required by this bill can be managed within the normal course of business using existing resources.

This bill will also result in a local expenditure increase of approximately \$2,350,000 statewide in FY 2021-22 for counties to purchase the equipment and software needed to verify mail-in ballot signatures. This bill is expected to also result in an additional non-recurring undetermined local expenditure increase to allow for the purchase of sorting machines for the mail-in ballots. Further, this bill is expected to result in a recurring undetermined local expenditure increase beginning in FY 2021-22 to cover the cost of mailing ballots to voters.

### **Explanation of Fiscal Impact**

#### **Introduced on February 2, 2021**

##### **State Expenditure**

This bill allows a person to register and vote absentee in-person within 30 days of a statewide election. The elector does not have to offer a reason to vote absentee, and this bill repeals §7-15-320, related to qualifications to vote absentee. Currently, a person must be registered at least 30 days prior to an election and must meet one of the requirements in §7-15-320 to be eligible to vote absentee.

Additionally, this bill requires county boards of voter registration and election to mail a ballot to each active elector in the county and establish ballot drop off sites and outlines all of the requirements for a ballot to be counted, including verification of the signature on the ballot. Currently, there is no requirement to mail active electors a ballot.

Also, this bill specifies that a college or university identification card may be used as valid identification for voting purposes. Currently, a college or university identification card is not considered valid identification for voting purposes.

Further, this bill requires the Department of Corrections and the Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services to inform an adult who has been convicted of a felony or an offense against the election laws and has served the sentence imposed, including probation and parole time, that he is eligible to register to vote.

**State Election Commission.** The State Election Commission anticipates mailing each active elector a ballot will result in an increase in General Fund expenditures. Currently, there are 3,529,686 registered voters in the state. The estimated cost to mail each voter a ballot, as required by this bill, is \$1.70. Therefore, the State Election Commission anticipates an increase in General Fund expenditures of \$6,000,000, beginning in FY 2021-22.

Additionally, this bill requires signature matching for all absentee ballots submitted. The commission anticipates a non-recurring increase in General Fund expenditures to update the state's Voter Registration and Election Management System (VREMS) to allow for signature matching totaling \$250,000. Additionally, the commission anticipates needing to update its training materials to reflect the changes made in this bill, including that college identification cards are an acceptable form of ID for voting. This will result in an estimated non-recurring General Fund expenditure of \$50,000. Therefore, this bill will result in a non-recurring General Fund expenditure increase of \$300,000 for the State Election Commission, in FY 2021-22.

**Department of Corrections.** SCDC indicates that the implementation of this bill will have no expenditure impact since the agency currently provides this service and documentation to inmates being discharged.

**Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services.** The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office estimates that the implementation of this bill will have no expenditure impact because the bill requires the department to perform activities that are conducted in the normal course of agency business.

#### **State Revenue**

N/A

#### **Local Expenditure**

This bill expands absentee voting and requires that a ballot be mailed to each active voter for statewide elections. We anticipate this will result in a recurring local expenditure for county boards of voter registration and elections to contract with certified ballot mailing vendors to mail ballots to voters and non-recurring local expenditure increase for counties to purchase sorting machines to process the mailed-in ballots. Therefore, this bill is expected to have an undetermined increase for local expenditures beginning in FY 2021-22.

Also, the State Election Commission anticipates that the cost to counties to purchase the necessary equipment and corresponding software to allow for signature verification on mail-in ballots will result in an approximate average cost of \$170,000 for each of the ten larger counties and \$18,000 for each of the 36 remaining counties. Therefore, the commission estimates the total non-recurring local expenditure statewide will be \$2,350,000 in FY 2021-22.

**Local Revenue**

N/A



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