



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.

Bill Number: H. 4590 Introduced on January 9, 2024
Author: G. M. Smith
Subject: Early Voting Hours
Requestor: House Judiciary
RFA Analyst(s): Tipton
Impact Date: March 18, 2024 - Updated to Include Expenditure Impact

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill extends the hours of operation of all early voting centers in the state to 7:00 PM for statewide general elections, any runoff election, or any other election that is not a statewide general or runoff election.

The State Election Commission (SEC) indicates that this bill will have no impact on the commission, as the extension of early voting hours will not have a direct impact on the poll worker pay reimbursed by the commission.

This bill will increase local expenditures by an undetermined amount for counties that choose to supplement the poll worker pay above the amount reimbursed by the SEC, which is \$75 per day. The overall local expenditure impact is dependent upon the amount the county may pay poll workers, the number of poll workers a county employs, and the number of elections in a given year, among other factors. The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) contacted all counties in the state and received responses from Charleston, Beaufort, Lancaster, and Kershaw Counties. Charleston County anticipates an increase in expenses totaling approximately \$90,000 for any election that is not a statewide general election, and \$45,000 for statewide general elections in order to maintain the county's current poll worker pay rate of up to \$25 per hour, including overtime. Charleston County further expects an increase in expenses for day porter, security, and other staff related to the extended operation of early voting centers in the amount of \$25,000 per year. Beaufort County anticipates an increase in expenses totaling approximately \$28,000 for any election that is not a statewide general election, and \$14,000 for statewide general elections in order to maintain the county's current poll worker pay rate of up to \$32 per hour, including overtime. Lancaster County anticipates an increase in expenses that will total approximately \$4,800 for all early voting periods in a given year, as the county reports that it would increase the daily rate for poll workers from the current level of \$100 per day to \$120 per day. The increased expenses for each of these counties are in addition to the amount that the SEC reimburses. Further, Kershaw County indicates that the county may need to consider raising the pay for poll workers above its current daily rate in order to ensure there is sufficient staff at the various early voting locations.

This impact statement has been updated to include a local expenditure impact.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Updated to Include Expenditure Impact on March 14, 2024

Introduced on January 9, 2024

State Expenditure

This bill extends the hours of operation of all early voting centers in the state to 7:00 PM for statewide general elections, any runoff election, or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. Currently, early voting centers must be open until 6:00 PM for statewide general elections and 5:00 PM for runoff elections or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. According to the SEC, poll managers are paid \$60 for attending training and \$75 for working on election day. The SEC indicates that the extension of early voting hours established by the bill will not have a direct impact on this pay, and therefore, the bill will have no impact on the SEC.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

This bill extends the hours of operation of all early voting centers in the state to 7:00 PM for statewide general elections, any runoff election, or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. Currently, early voting centers must be open until 6:00 PM for statewide general elections and 5:00 PM for runoff elections or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. RFA contacted each county in the state to determine the local expenditure impact of the extension of early voting hours. Based on responses from Charleston, Beaufort, Lancaster, and Kershaw Counties, this bill will have a local expenditure but will depend upon the number of poll workers, the current payment schedule for poll workers that is above the daily \$75 which is reimbursed by SEC, the number of elections, and whether a county may need to increase compensation for working at the polls in order to ensure adequate staffing for the polls.

Charleston County reports that its poll workers are currently paid between \$15 and \$25 per hour, and that the county hires 150 poll workers for Presidential elections. In order to maintain this pay rate, at the upper level of \$25 per hour, this bill's extension of early voting operation by 2 hours per day for any election that is not a statewide general election will increase expenses for poll worker pay by approximately \$90,000 over a 12-day early voting period. For statewide general elections, the bill's extension of early voting operation by 1 hour will result in an increase in expenses totaling approximately \$45,000 over a 12-day early voting period. The county further expects an increase in expenses for day porter, security, and other staff related to the extended operation of early voting centers in the amount of \$25,000 per year.

Beaufort County reports that its poll workers and other support staff members are currently paid between \$13 and \$32 per hour, and that the county hires up to 36 poll workers and managers to staff four early voting centers. In order to maintain this pay rate, at the upper level of \$32 per hour, this bill's extension of early voting operation by 2 hours per day for any election that is not a statewide general election will increase expenses for poll worker and staff pay by approximately \$28,000 over a 12-day early voting period. For statewide general elections, the

bill's extension of early voting operation by 1 hour will result in an increase in expenses totaling approximately \$14,000 over a 12-day early voting period.

Lancaster County reports that its poll workers are currently paid \$100 per day for early voting and \$120 per day for voting days, and up to 20 poll workers per day of early voting are required to staff two early voting centers. The county indicates it will increase poll worker daily pay on early voting days to \$120 due to the extended hours, which totals an expenditure increase of \$4,800 over a 12-day early voting period for any statewide elections in a given year.

Kershaw County indicates that poll workers in the county are not paid on an hourly basis, due to the longer hours required by this bill, the county may need to consider raising the pay for poll workers above its current daily rate in order to ensure that a sufficient number of people are willing to be poll workers. However, this increase is undetermined.

Overall, the local expenditure impact of this bill is dependent upon whether a county pays poll workers above the SEC reimbursement rate, the number of poll workers, whether overtime is paid due to the longer hours, the number of elections held in a year, and a number of other such factors.

This impact statement has been updated to include a local expenditure impact.

Local Revenue

N/A

Introduced on January 9, 2024

State Expenditure

This bill extends the hours of operation of all early voting centers in the state to 7:00 PM for statewide general elections, any runoff election, or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. Currently, early voting centers must be open until 6:00 PM for statewide general elections and 5:00 PM for runoff elections or any election that is not a statewide general or runoff election. According to the SEC, poll managers are paid \$60 for attending training and \$75 for working on election day. The SEC indicates that the extension of early voting hours established by the bill will not have a direct impact on this pay, and therefore, the bill will have no impact on the SEC.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

Counties may choose to supplement poll worker pay above the amount provided by the SEC as a result of the bill. However, the amount of additional pay and the number of counties that may choose to do so is unknown. Therefore, we anticipate an undetermined impact on local expenditures.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director