

OFFICE OF FISCAL ANALYSIS

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sSB-1226

AN ACT CONCERNING STATE VOTING RIGHTS IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN R. LEWIS.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	5,141,119	1,141,119
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Cost	263,822	263,822

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Various Municipalities	Potential Cost	Significant	Significant

Explanation

This bill would result in an estimated total cost to the state of \$5,404,941 in FY 24 and \$1,404,941 in FY 25. The bill would also result in significant cost to various municipalities across the state. The bill generally codifies into state law several aspects of the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 which bans discrimination in voting and elections and establishes a mechanism for certain jurisdictions with a history of discrimination against racial and language minorities to seek preapproval before changing their election laws.

The bill, which requires the Secretary of the State (SOTS) to establish

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 42.82% of payroll in FY 24.

and maintain a database containing a range of elections and demographic data, results in a one-time start-up cost for equipment and software of up to \$4,000,000 in FY 24 and up to \$500,000 annually thereafter. There is also a cost for two additional staff: 1) one Manager of the statewide database, as required in the bill, with an annual salary of \$110,000 and associated fringe of \$47,102, and 2) one IT Analyst with an annual salary of \$92,372 and associated fringe of \$39,554.

The bill also requires SOTS to make determinations of certain municipal plans intended to protect specified classes of electors. This determination process may include various municipalities simultaneously in the years following a redistricting or court litigation. This is estimated to result in an annualized cost to SOTS of \$413,747 for four additional staff and associated fringe to the Office of the State Comptroller of \$177,166 . The staff are anticipated to be one Deputy Elections Director, two Staff Attorneys, and one Elections Officer.

Additionally, the bill requires a municipality to provide language-related assistance in voting and elections if SOTS determines, based on the American Community Survey results or data of similar quality, that the municipality meets certain criteria. Additional costs to the SOTS will be dependent on the number of municipalities that meet these criteria and may be up to \$25,000 annually. Under Federal law, ten municipalities currently meet these criteria as of the most recent census². As the bill expands these criteria, this will likely include more municipalities.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission, The Attorney General and certain parties are allowed under this bill to bring an action in the Superior Court in the district of an alleged violation. This is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the state or municipalities.

² [Federal Register, 2021 Report](#)

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.