

BILL SUMMARY
1st Session of the 57th Legislature

Bill No.:	SB 444
Version:	Engrossed
Request Number:	
Author:	Rep. Wright and Sen. Jech
Date:	3/25/2019
Impact:	see below

Research Analysis

Engrossed SB 444 provides for a single election board framework for all counties, eliminating the distinction between counties with more than 17,500 registered voters and those with fewer. Any reference to the chief clerk of the election board in a county with fewer than 17,500 registered voters is eliminated.

Precinct election boards would be eliminated and replaced by three officials per precinct: a judge, a clerk, and an inspector. One must be from the largest political party in the state and one from the second-largest. These officials are to be appointed by the secretary of the county election board, and must be registered voters within the county. The secretary is authorized but not required to utilize a list of nominees for these positions from the county central committees of the two parties when making the appointments, and must maintain a current, public list of all precinct officials and absentee voting board members. A high school student in grades 11 or 12 who is at least 16 years of age may be appointed as a precinct official.

The measure requires additional precinct officials to be authorized by the Secretary of the State Election Board. Pay for precinct officials is increased for future elections, and inspectors are allowed mileage reimbursement for certain election-related travel. State employees could be allowed administrative leave without loss of pay or benefits to train or serve as a precinct official or other election worker.

SB 444 further requires proposed changes to precinct boundaries to be presented at a public meeting and approved by the county election board. The bill permits a polling place to be located outside the boundaries of a precinct, subject to rules and procedures established by the State Election Board.

Prepared By: Sean Webster

Fiscal Analysis

SB 444 in its current form will have the following estimated impacts on the State Election Board (SEB). Beginning:

FY-20: The \$10 increase in poll worker training stipend is expected to cost SEB \$80,000 per year. SEB anticipates the ability to annually cover the cost increase with candidate filing fees;

FY-21: Step One of the poll worker pay increase is expected to cost a total of \$120,000 per statewide election. This cost will be split per the measure by SEB and the counties. The measure increases each counties portion of poll worker pay from \$2 to \$5, statewide this will result in a total cost to counties statewide of approximately \$40,000 per statewide election. The expected cost to SEB will

be \$80,000 per statewide election. Two statewide elections are currently scheduled for FY-21, bringing SEB's cost to approximately \$160,000;
FY-25: Step Two of the poll worker pay increase is expected to cost SEB \$120,000 per statewide election; and
FY-29: Step Three of the poll worker pay increase is expected to cost SEB \$170,000 per statewide election.

Prepared By: John McPhetridge

Other Considerations

None.