

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

FISCAL NOTE

L.R. No.: 4195S.02I
Bill No.: SB 836
Subject: County Officials; Elections; Secretary of State
Type: Original
Date: January 26, 2026

Bill Summary: This proposal modifies provisions relating to elections.

FISCAL SUMMARY

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE FUND

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Revenue*	\$0	\$0 or More than (\$9,000,000)	\$0
Total Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue	\$0	\$0 or More than (\$9,000,000)	\$0

*Costs of approximately \$9 million in March 2028 (FY 2028) for holding a Presidential Preference Primary Election.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON OTHER STATE FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>Other</u> State Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

Numbers within parentheses: () indicate costs or losses.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>All</u> Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on FTE	0	0	0

☒ Estimated Net Effect (expenditures or reduced revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.

☐ Estimated Net Effect (savings or increased revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Government	\$0	(Unknown)	\$0

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ASSUMPTION

§§115.123, 115.125, 115.127, 115.233, 115.277, 115.284, 115.351, 115.427, 115.430, 115.453, 115.637, 115.755, 115.758, 115.761, 115.765, 115.767, 115.770, 115.773, 115.776, 115.785, & 115.904 – Elections

Officials from the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)** state this bill would reinstate the presidential preference primary election which was previously held in March of any presidential election year. The projected impact is estimated at up to \$9 million in FY 2028, based on the cost of past primary and general election reimbursements.

As this election is scheduled for the first Tuesday of March, it may coincide with the municipal primary elections held by charter counties (scheduled for the Tuesday following the first Monday of March); in this case, proportional cost sharing may reduce the state's obligations for this election.

Oversight notes §115.785 states all costs of a presidential preference primary shall be paid by the state. The payment of election costs is subject to appropriation by the General Assembly. However, if they assume that the presidential preference primary was to be fully appropriated as it has been in years past, SOS anticipates a cost of \$9 million. Oversight has reflected, in this fiscal note, a \$9 million cost due to reinstating the requirement to hold a PPP. The next scheduled Presidential Preference Primary election would be in March 2028 (FY28). As this election is scheduled for the first Tuesday in March, it may coincide with the municipal primary elections held by charter counties (scheduled for the Tuesday following the first Monday of March); in this case, proportional cost sharing may reduce the state's obligations for this election. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a potential election cost for reimbursement to local political subdivisions in FY 2028.

In addition, officials from the **SOS** note many bills considered by the General Assembly include provisions allowing or requiring agencies to submit rules and regulations to implement the act. The SOS is provided with core funding to handle a certain amount of normal activity resulting from each year's legislative session. The fiscal impact for this fiscal note to the SOS for Administrative Rules is less than \$5,000. The SOS recognizes that this is a small amount and does not expect that additional funding would be required to meet these costs. However, the SOS also recognizes that many such bills may be passed by the General Assembly in a given year and that collectively the costs may be in excess of what the office can sustain with its core budget. Therefore, the SOS reserves the right to request funding for the cost of supporting administrative rules requirements should the need arise based on a review of the finally approved bills signed by the governor.

Oversight assumes the SOS could absorb the costs of printing and distributing regulations related to this proposal. If multiple bills pass which require the printing and distribution of regulations at substantial costs, the SOS could require additional resources.

Officials from the **Platte County Board of Elections** assume adding the Presidential Preference Primary would cost about \$100,000 in years when it occurs.

Officials from the **St. Louis City Board of Elections** assume while the bill assigns responsibility for presidential primary election costs to the state, the total cost of administering a citywide election exceeds \$400,000.

Officials from the **St. Louis County Board of Elections** assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their organization.

In response to similar legislation, SCS for HCS for HB 507 (2025), officials from the **Kansas City Election board** assumed conducting a Presidential Primary election would cost \$850,000.

Oversight notes section 115.785 states all costs of a presidential preference primary shall be paid by the state, except that, pursuant to section 115.065, costs shall be shared proportionately by the state and any political subdivisions and special districts holding an election on the same day as any such primary. Therefore, the fiscal note will reflect the cost and reimbursement to local election authorities netting to zero.

In addition, Oversight assumes that local election authorities will incur election expenses that are not covered by the state. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a negative unknown impact in the fiscal note.

In response to similar legislation, HB 1573 (2025), officials from the **Kansas City Election Board** assumed to add a third week of early voting would cost between \$15,000 to \$25,000 per election depending on how many absentee satellites are needed.

In response to similar legislation, HB 972 (2025), officials from the **St. Louis City Board of Elections** stated labor for one week of no excuse voting utilizing satellites comes to approximately \$5,000 per week. Voters utilized, heavily, no excuse, early, in person options in advance of the November 2025 General Election to the point they are considering fewer Election Day voting locations. While an additional week of no excuse voting will add staffing costs for that week, this provision could ultimately result in a fiscal savings if the amount of labor to conduct election day is decreased.

Oversight notes the proposal lengthens the in-person no-excuse absentee voting period from two to four weeks. Oversight assumes while additional weeks of no excuse voting will increase potential costs to local election authorities, that cost would be offset by the decrease in labor costs on election day. Therefore, Oversight will not reflect a fiscal impact for this provision of the proposal.

Oversight only reflects the responses that we have received from state agencies and political subdivisions; however, other county clerks and local election authorities were requested to respond to this proposed legislation but did not. Upon the receipt of additional responses, Oversight will review to determine if an updated fiscal note should be prepared and seek the necessary approval to publish a new fiscal note. A general listing of political subdivisions included in our database is available upon request.

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – State Government</u>	FY 2027 (10 Mo.)	FY 2028	FY 2029
GENERAL REVENUE FUND			
<u>Cost - SOS (§115.785) Reimbursement of election costs to local election authorities for PPP p.3</u>	<u>\$0</u>	\$0 or More than <u>(\$9,000,000)</u>	<u>\$0</u>
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE FUND	<u>\$0</u>	\$0 or More than <u>(\$9,000,000)</u>	<u>\$0</u>

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – Local Government</u>	FY 2027 (10 Mo.)	FY 2028	FY 2029
LOCAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS			
<u>Reimbursement – Local Election Authorities (§115.785) Reimbursement of election costs p.4</u>	<u>\$0</u>	\$0 or More than <u>(\$9,000,000)</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<u>Cost – Local Election Authorities (§115.785) Holding PPP election p.4</u>	<u>\$0</u>	\$0 or More than <u>(\$9,000,000)</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<u>Cost – Local Election Authorities (§115.785) Election expenses not covered by State p.4</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>(Unknown)</u>	<u>\$0</u>
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS	<u>\$0</u>	<u>(Unknown)</u>	<u>\$0</u>

FISCAL IMPACT – Small Business

No direct fiscal impact on small businesses would be expected as a result of this proposal.

FISCAL DESCRIPTION

NOTICES OF ELECTION (Section 115.125)

The act allows a notice of election to be sent by email.

CANDIDATE FILING DEADLINES - LOCAL OFFICES (Section 115.127)

Under current law, the period for filing a declaration of candidacy in certain political subdivisions and special districts is from 8:00 a.m. on the 17th Tuesday prior to the election until 5:00 p.m. on the 14th Tuesday prior to the election. This act changes that period to 8:00 a.m. on the 16th Tuesday prior to the election until 5:00 p.m. on the 13th Tuesday prior to the election, unless the 13th Tuesday prior to an election falls on a holiday, then the closing of filing shall be at 5:00 p.m. on the next day that is not a holiday.

TESTING OF ELECTION EQUIPMENT (Section 115.233)

Current law requires, in any election in which an electronic voting system is to be used, an election authority to have the automatic tabulating equipment tested within 14 days prior to the election to ascertain that the equipment is in compliance with the law and that it will correctly count the votes cast for all offices and on all questions. This act changes the timeline for testing such that it must be completed at least 14 days, but no less than one week prior to the election.

ABSENTEE VOTING (Sections 115.277 and 115.286)

Current law allows any qualified voter, beginning two weeks prior to an election, to vote absentee in person at a location designated by the election authority without stating a reason for doing so. This act extends that period to four weeks prior to an election.

The act allows eligible covered voters to vote absentee by submitting a federal postcard application at the office of the election authority on election day even though the person is not registered. Interstate former residents and new residents may vote by absentee ballot at the office of the election authority on election day for the offices for which such voters are entitled to vote.

The act provides that all lists of absentee ballot applications for persons with permanent disabilities shall be kept confidential. Such lists of applications shall not be posted or displayed in an area open to the general public, nor shall such lists of applications be shown to any unauthorized person.

The act repeals a provision that stipulates that absentee ballots that are received by a local election authority in person are deemed cast when received prior to election day and absentee ballots that are received through a common carrier are deemed cast when received prior to the closing of polls. (Section 115.286)

VOTER IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS (Section 115.427)

The act makes accommodations for individuals who appear at the office of an election authority to vote absentee and fail to present a form of personal identification by explicitly allowing such voters to cast a provisional ballot that will only be counted upon the voter returning to the office of the election authority by 7:00 p.m. on election day and presenting a form of personal identification for voting.

CASTING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS (Section 115.430)

The act expands a provision of law governing the casting and counting of provisional ballots to all public elections, rather than just particular primary or general elections.

WRITE-IN CANDIDATES - REPEAL OF EXEMPTION FOR ELECTIONS WITHOUT PARTY CANDIDATES (Section 115.453)

Current law provides that votes for write-in candidates are only counted for candidates who have filed a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate. Current law also provides an exemption to this requirement in instances where no candidate has filed for the office in question. This act repeals the exemption so that write-in candidates are only counted when a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate has been filed with the proper election authority.

ELECTION OFFENSE - ELECTIONEERING (Section 115.637)

This act expands the election offense of exit polling, surveying, sampling, electioneering, distributing election literature, posting signs or placing vehicles bearing signs with respect to any candidate or question to be voted on at an election within 50 feet of the door to a polling place, rather than 25 feet as provided in current law. Violation of this provision is punishable by imprisonment of not more than 1 year or by a fine of not more than \$2,500 or by both such imprisonment and fine.

PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARY ELECTION (Sections 115.123, 115.351, 115.755 - 115.904)

This act reinstates the presidential preference primary election to be held on the first Tuesday in March of each year in which a presidential election is held.

This legislation is not federally mandated, would not duplicate any other program and would not require additional capital improvements or rental space.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Office of the Secretary of State
Platte County Board of Elections
St. Louis City Board of Elections
St. Louis County Board of Elections
Kansas City Election Board



Julie Morff
Director
January 26, 2026



Jessica Harris
Assistant Director
January 26, 2026