

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**

Senate Bill 15 (Senators Jacobs and Ferguson)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Election Law - Voter Registration List - Reports of Deceased Voters**

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This bill requires the State Administrator of Elections to make arrangements with the U.S. Social Security Administration to receive reports of names and addresses, if available, of all individuals at least 16 years old reported deceased within the State. The State Administrator is also authorized to make arrangements with any agencies or entities to receive reports of deceased individuals at least 16 years old if determined to be reliable. This information would then be transmitted to the appropriate local boards of elections.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill is not expected to affect State finances.

**Local Effect:** County expenditures may decrease minimally due to reduced confirmation mailings sent to confirm reports of deceased voters.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) must report to the State Administrator of Elections the names and addresses (if known) of all individuals at least 16 years old reported deceased in the State. This information is transmitted to the appropriate local boards of elections and, pursuant to SBE regulations, can be relied on to remove deceased individuals from the statewide voter registration list. A local election

director may also remove a deceased voter from the statewide voter registration list when a local board of elections becomes aware of an obituary or other reliable report other than from DHMH of the death of a registered voter. However, a notice must be mailed to the address shown on the statewide voter registration list to verify that the voter is in fact deceased and the individual may not be removed from the voter registration list until verification has been received.

**Background:** The State Board of Elections (SBE) currently receives reports of deceased individuals from the Social Security Administration through the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). ERIC is a partnership of seven states and the District of Columbia, formed in 2012 with the assistance of The Pew Charitable Trusts, which “uses advanced technology to compare information on eligible voters from official data submitted by member states, such as voter registration rolls and motor vehicle records, as well as U.S. Postal Service addresses and Social Security death records.” Information identifying voters whose records may no longer be up to date is forwarded to the participating states to process in accordance with the state’s voter registration list maintenance procedures.

Currently, when local boards of elections in Maryland receive Social Security Administration death record information through ERIC, a confirmation mailing is sent to the voter in order to verify the voter’s death before removing the individual from the statewide voter registration list. Death records from DHMH are sent to SBE monthly and, pursuant to SBE regulations, can be relied on by the local boards of election to remove the individuals from the voter registration list without sending a confirmation mailing.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** Local boards of election expenditures are expected to decrease minimally to the extent the bill allows for Social Security Administration death records received through ERIC to be relied on to remove a voter from the statewide voter registration list without having to send a confirmation mailing. In a medium-sized county, costs are expected to decrease by less than \$1,000.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** State Board of Elections; Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Maryland Department of Transportation; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Charles,

Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George's counties; The Pew Charitable Trusts;  
Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 21, 2014  
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