

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 364 (Senator Simonaire, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Election Law - Election Day Page Program - Establishment

This bill establishes an Election Day Page Program, the purpose of which is to (1) stimulate the interest of students in the election process; (2) provide assistance to election judges in polling places on Election Day; and (3) ensure the safe entry and exit of elderly voters and voters with disabilities from polling places.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill can be implemented with existing resources.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect local government finances, it is expected that local boards of elections that choose to participate in the program can do so with relatively minimal costs. Revenues are not affected.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Training Program and Implementing Regulations

The State Board of Elections (SBE) (1) must develop a page training program for participating local boards of elections that includes the duties, responsibilities, and prohibited conduct of pages at a polling place on Election Day and (2) may adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of the bill.

Local Board of Elections Optional Participation and Implementation

A local board of elections may (but is not required to) participate in the program and each participating local board must (1) be responsible for the staffing of and implementation of the training program developed by SBE and (2) ensure each page receives the required training before Election Day. An individual may not work as a page in a polling place unless the individual has completed the training.

Each participating local board of elections, in coordination with the local school system, must establish a procedure for the selection of pages by the local board, and each participating local board may recognize and certify community service hours for pages.

Election Day Page Qualifications and Requirements

To qualify as a page, an individual must (1) be under the age of 16; (2) be a student enrolled in a public or nonpublic school in grade 6 or higher or be a participant in a home instruction program receiving academic instruction on a level equivalent to grade 6 or higher; (3) apply to the local board of elections in the individual's county of residence; (4) be available to work at least one full four-hour shift on Election Day; and (5) complete the required training before Election Day.

A page may not engage in any partisan activity while working at a polling place or handle or touch a marked ballot at any time, a page may work up to two four-hour shifts at a polling place on Election Day.

Each page must take and subscribe to a written oath, which, when returned to the local board of elections, constitutes the commission of position of Election Day Page. Each page must serve under the direct supervision of the chief election judges for the assigned polling place and assist election judges with Election Day duties, as directed.

Current Law: Under State law, Maryland residents age 16 or older are eligible to register to vote and serve as an election judge.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): State Board of Elections; Maryland State Department of Education; Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Montgomery, Queen Anne's, and St. Mary's counties; Montgomery County Public Schools; Department of Legislative Services

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