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S.B. 147
(I_135_1547-2)
135th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for S.B. 147's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: In Senate General Government

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Reynolds

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

Jared Cape, Budget Analyst

Highlights

- County boards of elections could incur additional costs to update an increased volume of party affiliation changes when leading up to an election. To handle this additional workload, election officials would likely work overtime and receive either overtime pay or compensatory time.
- The Secretary of State may incur some additional GRF and non-GRF expenses for changing the procedures for maintaining the Statewide Voter Registration Database, updating written materials and forms, and revising training for county boards of elections.

Detailed Analysis

Overview

The Secretary of State and county boards of elections will need to update practices and materials to comply with the bill. Additionally, county boards of elections may incur additional costs to update an increased volume of voter registrations, as voters opt to change their party affiliation between elections. Specifically, the bill requires the Secretary of State to allow voters to update their party affiliation between primary elections. For primary elections, voters may choose which political party's primary election to participate in and therefore indicate their political affiliation. Voters that wish to be unaffiliated may take an issues-only ballot. Under the bill, voters may update their political affiliation at any time. Ohio's current system allows a voter to request any party's ballot at a primary so long as the person claims to be a member of that party, and there is no mechanism to change party affiliations between primary elections. The bill also makes changes to candidacy requirements and the way new political parties are formed. The bill's potential fiscal effects are explained in more detail below.

County boards of elections

County boards of elections may incur additional costs to update an increased volume of voter registrations, as voters opt to change their party affiliation when leading up to an election. To handle these possible increases, election officials would likely work overtime and receive either overtime pay or compensatory time. Under current law, voters who have not voted in the preceding two calendar years are considered unaffiliated. The bill specifies that a voter who is registered in Ohio before the bill takes effect keeps the voter's current party affiliation as of the bill's effective date based on the voter's recent voting history. According to the county boards of elections' voter registration and voter history data published on October 7, 2023, Ohio's voter affiliation breakdown is approximately as follows:

- Number of Registered Voters in Ohio: 7,969,963
- Number of Unaffiliated Registered Voters: 5,567,152
- Number of Registered Republicans: 1,372,491
- Number of Registered Democrats: 1,028,479
- Number of Registered Libertarians: 1,841

Secretary of State

The bill requires the Secretary of State to change procedures for maintaining the Statewide Voter Registration Database, update written materials and forms, and revise training for county boards of elections. The additional effort to comply with the bill will likely be absorbed by existing personnel and using existing equipment, and paid through current appropriations made through GRF appropriation line item (ALI) 050321, Operating Expenses, and Fund 5990 ALI 050630, Elections Support Supplement.