

Various sources do not have information relating to the number of tax levies that typically exceed 4% or the number of petitions that result in the question being placed before the voters. However, when a recall petition results in the question being put before the voters, the usual outcome is that the tax levy fails.

Reducing the number of signatures would require less time and cost associated with signature verification. However, HB 133 GA might result in an increase in the number of petitions needing signature verification due the fewer-signature requirement. The many variables make it impossible to estimate the county clerk's expenditures regarding petitions and signatures. However, changing the minimum requirement from 100 voters (in HB 133) to 5,000 or 10% (in HB 133 GA) will lessen the increase in the number of petitions.

Based on information received in early 2020 from Harp Enterprises, a vendor that provides electronic voting machines to almost 100 Kentucky counties, there are additional programming costs associated with adding a new constitutional amendment to the ballot on an already scheduled statewide election. For example, the cost to add a new category to the ballot for Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, with 286 precincts, was estimated at between \$3,500 and \$4,500, and for Franklin County, with 44 precincts, the cost was estimated at between \$1,700 and \$2,500.

The Lexington-Fayette County Clerk has indicated that the cost to add a question to ballot is generally \$3,000 to \$4,000 per county. He said that Harp Enterprises charges an hourly rate to program; the cost to install on each machine is absorbed in the general election cost of the county. County clerks may request reimbursement from the State Board of Elections for personnel costs necessary for the conduct of elections. The amount cannot exceed fifty cents (\$0.50) per registered voter per year (KRS 117.343); due to funding constraints, the State Board of Elections has reported that counties receive about \$0.34 per registered voter. This reimbursement amount does not cover the total cost of the election to the county.

The Louisville Jefferson County Clerk uses paper scanners and its own in-house IT department to program and test. Jefferson County's main expense is related to the printing of ballots. If the number of candidates and any potential questions exceeded the space on one ballot, an additional ballot page would be printed. This could result in an approximate cost increase of \$30,000 to \$40,000 per election.

Overall, the potential for increased costs related to recall question elections is limited to the verification of signatures and preparation of the ballot, both for electronic use and printing of paper ballots. In years where there are many candidates and/or multiple constitutional questions, costs will increase, mostly the result of multiple-page ballots. The Fayette County Clerk estimated that each additional page for a ballot would cost up to \$0.25 for a paper ballot, depending on the county's printing contract. Therefore, the total cost would depend on the number of paper ballots that would need the extra page.

Part III: Differences to Local Government Mandate Statement from Prior Versions

Part II, above, relates to HB 133 GA, which is identical to HB 133 HCS 1. **The fiscal impact of HB 133 HCS 1 is minimal, which was the same as for HB HCS 1 and HB 133 as introduced.**

HB 133 HCS 1 made the following change as compared to the introduced bill:

- changed the minimum requirement for signatures on a recall petition from 100 registered and qualified voters (in HB 133) to 5,000 registered and qualified voters or 10% of the registered and qualified voters who cast votes in the last preceding presidential election, whichever is less (in HB 133 HCS 1).

Data Source(s): LRC staff; Harp Enterprises; State Board of Elections; Lexington-Fayette County Clerk; Louisville Jefferson County Clerk; Kentucky School Boards Association; Kentucky County Clerks' Association

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