

HB 586 would have a minimal to moderate fiscal impact on county clerk offices.

Change in Primary Date

The change in primary date would not likely have a cost to local governments.

In-Person Absentee Voting and Expanded Poll Hours

Allowing early in-person absentee voting for all voters could result in a significant additional expense for county clerk offices. The offices may need to employ additional people for those days to coordinate lines of qualified voters who wish to cast votes. This would be particularly true for the required Saturday voting, which would increase costs for poll workers, staff, and possible location rental if Saturday voting is not already allowed in a county. There would also be costs for counties to update equipment, and there would be costs associated with additional staffing for in-person early voting in general.

Adding an additional hour for voting on election day would also increase costs for poll workers, staff, and location rental. Some county clerks are having difficulty recruiting poll workers because of the amount of time involved; an additional hour would make recruiting and retention even more difficult. One county clerk said that he might need to split poll workers into shorter shifts so that they may be more amenable to working on election day, but this would require more workers and more money to pay them.

The State Board of Elections reports that the state pays each county clerk \$0.34 per voter who was registered at the time of the election. (KRS 117.343 allows payment up to \$0.50 per registered voter, but this is contingent upon funding.) Reimbursement is based on personnel expenses and is only reimbursed after a primary election. The eligibility of the county varies because of the number of registered voters at the time of the election. Also, under KRS 117.345, which allows payment of \$255 per precinct, each fiscal court is actually paid \$200 per precinct registered in the county upon certification of the election as reimbursement to the county for election related expenses. The difference between the statutory and actual amounts is attributable to General Assembly funding.

The funds currently received are not sufficient to cover election costs, and the counties must cover the remainder.

Runoff Election

HB 586 would require a runoff election of the winning slate of candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor received less than 50% of its party's votes in a primary. The runoff would be between the two slates of candidates receiving the most votes. Absent additional state funding, the runoff election would be a significant expense for counties.

According to the Secretary of State, each election typically costs approximately \$9 million, although the 2020 elections cost significantly more. Much of this cost is spread among the counties. A 2016 local option special election in Boyd County alone cost \$80,000. A survey has estimated a special election costs \$1,200 per precinct. The 2018 special election in Bullitt County cost the county of \$45,000.

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

Part II, above, relates to the bill as introduced.

Data Source(s): LRC staff; Fayette County Clerk;
<https://www.wymt.com/2020/06/30/2020-kentucky-primary-will-go-down-as-historic-expensive-election/>;
https://www.dailyindependent.com/news/special-elections-prove-costly-for-kentucky-counties/article_cc1610f4-50d0-11e6-9d97-2380909c274c.html; Kentucky County Clerks' Association

Preparer: Robert Jenkins **Reviewer:** KHC **Date:** 3/11/21