


Government of the District of Columbia
Office of the Chief Financial Officer



Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia

FROM: Jeffrey S. DeWitt
Chief Financial Officer 

DATE: November 14, 2018

SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Statement – Voting Rights Notification Amendment Act of 2018

REFERENCE: Bill 22-312, Draft Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on November 14, 2018

Conclusion

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2022 budget and financial plan to implement the bill.

Background

In the District of Columbia, an eligible elector is any resident of the District who is a citizen, will be at least 18 years of age on the date of a general election,¹ is not presently incarcerated for a felony crime, and has otherwise not been determined to be legally incompetent to vote. Once an individual has been released from incarceration, her or his right to vote is restored, and she or he can reregister to vote. Individuals within the custody of a District agency who have been accused but not yet convicted of a felony crime are eligible to vote.

The bill requires the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) to enhance their efforts to register eligible voters within their custody. The bill requires DYRS to provide information to youth within its custody on the voting rights of individuals with criminal records in the District. The bill requires DOC, during both the intake and release processes, to identify eligible electors who are not registered to vote, provide them with voter registration applications, and inform them about the voting rights of individuals with criminal

¹ The Youth Vote Amendment Act of 2018, approved by the Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety on November 1, 2018, would lower the age of an eligible elector to 16, but that bill (22-778) was tabled at the Council's November 13, 2018 Legislative Meeting and is still pending approval by the full Council.

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

FIS: Bill 22-312, "Voting Rights Notification Amendment Act of 2018," Draft Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on November 14, 2018

records in the District. DOC must also include information about the voting rights of individuals with criminal records in any inmate handbooks or similar resources.

The bill also requires the Mayor's Office of Returning Citizens Affairs (MORCA) to develop a plan to assist returning citizens and individuals within DYRS and DOC custody to register to vote or and provide them with information about the voting rights of individuals with criminal records in the District. The bill requires DOC to assist with these efforts by periodically providing MORCA with the names and contact information of any inmates released from its custody.

Financial Plan Impact

Funds are sufficient in the fiscal year 2019 through fiscal year 2022 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. DOC and DYRS are designated voter registration agencies² and process hundreds of voter registrations each year. DOC is active in registering eligible individuals to vote and the bill's implementation supports current practices. DOC can also periodically provide MORCA with a list of inmates released from its custody with existing resources. DYRS can meet the bill's information and notification requirements for its population with its existing budgeted resources.

The bill also codifies much of what MORCA currently does for voter registration outreach to individuals in custody at DOC. MORCA will need to formalize a voter outreach plan and start working with DYRS, but it can do that with existing budgeted resources.

² District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 700; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.07(d)(1)(B)).