

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:** September 15, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Impact Statement – Automatic Voter Registration Amendment Act of 2016

**REFERENCE:** Bill 21-194, Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on September 7, 2016

---

**Conclusion**

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2017 through fiscal year 2020 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The bill will cost an estimated \$310,000 in fiscal year 2017 and \$660,000 over the four-year financial plan.

**Background**

The bill requires<sup>1</sup> the District of Columbia Board of Elections (DCBOE) to accept electronic information<sup>2</sup> from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) so that the DCBOE can automatically register individuals to vote. Residents that apply for a new DMV issued driver's license or identification card will have their information automatically forwarded to the DCBOE unless they elect to abstain from registering. The bill requires the DCBOE and the DMV to jointly develop an application form in order to collect the information needed to register a voter. Within five days of receiving a completed application form, the DMV must electronically submit an applicant's information to the DCBOE. If a person that is not a qualified elector becomes registered to vote and attempts to vote as a result of automatic registration through the DMV, they cannot be held civilly or criminally liable for corrupt election practices.

---

<sup>1</sup> By amending The District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.01 et seq.).

<sup>2</sup> Including an applicant's legal name, date of birth, residence, mailing address, previous voter registration address, DMV issued identification number or social security number, party affiliation, whether an applicant would like information on serving as a poll worker in the next election, citizenship information, and the electronic signature of each applicant.

The Honorable Phil Mendelson

FIS: "Automatic Voter Registration Amendment Act of 2016," Committee Print as shared with the Office of Revenue Analysis on September 7, 2016.

The bill shortens<sup>3</sup> the voting registration deadline from 30 days preceding a regularly scheduled election to 21 days. The DCBOE is responsible for processing all registration applications received by this deadline. Additionally, the bill allows a registered voter to file a change of address on election day at the new polling place for the petitioning voter. Under current law, voters may only file a change of address at the polling place assigned to them by the DCBOE before election day.

### Financial Plan Impact

Funds are not sufficient in the fiscal year 2017 through fiscal year 2020 budget and financial plan to implement the bill. The requirement for the DCBOE and the DMV to share electronic information for automatically registering voters who are applying for a driver's license or ID card will have a cost.

The DCBOE currently imports electronic voter registration data from the DMV through a secure file transfer protocol site. In order to electronically send the mailing addresses and previous voter registration addresses of registered voters to the DCBOE, the DMV will need to complete a computer system upgrade. Currently, the DMV does not collect and transmit this information to the DCBOE. This upgrade is estimated to have a one-time cost of \$200,000. The DMV will also need to update its combined license and voter registration form to ask people if they would like to opt out of registering to vote. The agency can absorb the estimated \$15,000 cost of procuring new forms within its fiscal year 2017 budget.

The DCBOE will need to add two full time positions to process additional registrations and to accommodate a shorter pre-election registration deadline. These positions are estimated to cost \$110,000 in fiscal year 2017 and \$460,000 over the financial plan. The DCBOE may incur additional costs if it cannot update voting registration notification mailings to accommodate the requirements under the bill. At this time, it is unknown whether or not additional funds will be needed to procure new registration notification mailings.

Estimate Fiscal Impact for Bill 21-194 – Automatic Voter Registration Amendment Act of 2016					
Fiscal Impact	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Total
DCBOE FTEs	\$109,855	\$113,150	\$116,545	\$120,041	\$459,591
DMV System Upgrade	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$200,000
Total	\$309,855	\$113,150	\$116,545	\$120,041	\$659,591

Table Notes:

1. Assumes two Grade 9, step 1 FTEs and a fringe benefit rate of 19.9 percent. Assumes an annual three percent step increase for both FTEs.

<sup>3</sup> By amending The District of Columbia Election Code of 1955, approved August 12, 1955 (69 Stat. 699; D.C. Official Code § 1-1001.01 et seq.).