

*Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note*

**STATE and LOCAL  
REVISED FISCAL IMPACT**

(replaces fiscal note dated January 25, 2011)

**Drafting Number:** LLS 11-0147  
**Prime Sponsor(s):** Rep. Court  
Sen. Roberts

**Date:** February 14, 2011  
**Bill Status:** House Appropriations  
**Fiscal Analyst:** Bill Zepernick (303-866-4777)

**TITLE:** CONCERNING THE FORM OF A STATEWIDE BALLOT TITLE.

<b>Fiscal Impact Summary</b>	<b>FY 2011-2012</b>	<b>FY 2012-2013</b>	<b>FY 2013-2014</b>
<b>State Revenue</b>			
<b>State Expenditures</b>			
Cash Funds			
Department of State Cash Fund		\$187,000 - \$600,000	\$0 - \$112,000
<b>FTE Position Change</b>			
<b>Effective Date:</b> Upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.			
<b>Appropriation Summary for FY 2011-2012:</b> None required.			
<b>Local Government Impact:</b> See Local Government Impact section.			

**Summary of Legislation**

The bill, *as amended by the House SVMA* committee, establishes a uniform style for statewide ballot titles for initiated and referred measures beginning with the 2012 general election. These changes include:

- presenting key points of the ballot issue as a bulleted list rather than in paragraph form;
- expanding the current "Yes" or "No" response to a ballot issue to "Yes/For" or "No/Against"; and
- replacing the phrase "and, in connection therewith" with the word "that" before the bulleted section of the ballot title.

Amendments adopted by the House SVMA committee increase reimbursement to counties by \$0.02 per statewide ballot measure for each active voter in a county at the time of the election.

**State Expenditures**

**The Department of State is expected to have increased expenditures of \$187,000 to \$600,000 in even-year elections beginning in FY 2012-13 and \$0 to \$112,000 in odd-year elections beginning in FY 2013-14.** These costs are from increased reimbursement to counties at a rate of \$0.02 per statewide ballot measure for each active voter in a county. The fiscal note

assumes that there are 1.86 million active voters in the state and that in even-year elections there are between 5 and 15 ballot measures and in odd-year elections there are between 0 and 3 ballot measures. These costs are paid from the Department of State Cash Fund.

### **Local Government Impact**

The bill increases costs to counties to implement the required ballot format. At the same time, reimbursement to counties from the state for election costs is also increased. The format changes to ballot titles required by the bill are expected to increase costs to counties in two main areas: 1) printing and postage from increased ballot length; and 2) voting machine programming. Costs and revenue to counties are discussed below.

***Printing and postage costs.*** Including bulleted lists in ballot titles and expanding the "Yes/No" voting description could make ballots longer, which would increase the printing and postage costs to counties. The exact length of ballots varies by election year and location, so it is difficult to predict what impact the format change would have in any given election in a county. In general election years with a large number of ballot measures, the format required by the bill could increase ballot length significantly.

A large, Front Range county could have increased printing costs between \$50,000 and \$200,000, depending on the length of the ballot. Mailing costs would also increase, depending on the additional weight of the ballot and the number of voters requesting mail ballots. Counties with smaller populations would also incur increased costs in these areas in proportion to their size. The increased printing and postage costs for counties would be lower in election years with fewer ballot measures.

***Programming costs.*** Counties are required to maintain electronic voting machines for the purpose of complying with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The formatting changes to ballot titles would require a one-time programming change to ensure that voting machines properly display ballot measures. Counties that have in-house programmers can likely absorb the extra staff time required to make the changes; counties that contract with outside programmers would likely incur increased costs to pay their contractors to make these changes to their electronic voting systems.

***Reimbursement to counties.*** As mentioned in the state expenditures section, the Department of State is required to reimburse counties based on the number of active registered voters in each county and the number of statewide ballot measures. Large counties such as Denver and El Paso counties could receive up to \$15,000 in odd-year elections and up to \$60,000 in even-year elections, depending on the number of statewide ballot measures. Smaller counties would receive a lower amount in proportion to the number of active voters in their counties.

### **Departments Contacted**

Legislature

State