

**STATE  
FISCAL IMPACT**

**Drafting Number:** LLS 13-0001

**Date:** January 17, 2013

**Prime Sponsor(s):** Rep. Szabo

**Bill Status:** House SVMA

**Fiscal Analyst:** Bill Zepernick (303-866-4777)

**TITLE:** CONCERNING A STANDARD THAT MAKES A BALLOT TITLE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND.

| <b>Fiscal Impact Summary</b>   | <b>FY 2013-2014</b> | <b>FY 2014-2015</b> |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>State Revenue</b>   |                     |                     |
| <b>State Expenditures</b>  |                     |                     |
| <b>FTE Position Change</b>   |                     |                     |
| <b>Effective Date:</b> August 7, 2013, if the General Assembly adjourns on May 8, 2013, as scheduled, and no referendum petition is filed. |                     |                     |
| <b>Appropriation Summary for FY 2013-2014:</b> None required.  |                     |                     |
| <b>Local Government Impact:</b> Potential costs. See Local Government Impact section.  |                     |                     |

**Summary of Legislation**

The bill requires, to the extent possible, that ballot titles must:

- be written in plain language;
- use words that are understandable to the average reader; and
- be clear and concise.

The plain language requirement applies to citizen-initiated measures that have their titles set by the Title Board and to measures referred to the ballot by the General Assembly. Ballot titles for measures referred by the General Assembly are presumed to conform with the plain language requirement.

**State Expenditures**

Any costs under the bill will be minimal and absorbed within existing resources. The Office of Legislative Legal Services will incorporate the bill's plain language requirement into practices before the Title Board and in the drafting of referred measures. The Supreme Court may hear cases alleging a violation of the plain language standard; however, such cases are expected to be infrequent and represent a minimal increase in the workload of the Supreme Court.

**Local Government Impact**

The plain language requirement could affect the length of ballots in some or all Colorado counties, especially in election years with a substantial number of ballot measures. However, the exact impact of the plain language requirement in comparison to current law cannot be estimated, as using plain language in ballot titles could either cause the ballot length to increase or decrease, depending on the subject matter of the measure. Increased ballot length can increase costs for printing and postage for county clerks, especially in the event that an additional page is required on ballot forms. Any impact to county clerks is assumed to be minimal.

**Departments Contacted**

Judicial  
Personnel and Administration  
State

Legislative Council Staff  
Law  
Office of Legislative Legal Services