

Legislative Analysis



SECURITY FEATURES ON BALLOTS

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House Bill 4967 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Brad Paquette
Committee: Elections and Ethics
Complete to 10-25-21

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4967 would add a section to the division of the Michigan Election Law that concerns the preparation, printing, and delivery of official ballots. It would require that, beginning on the date the bill took effect, all ballots used at elections must include security features to prevent duplication, including use of color inks and microprinting.

Now and under the bill, the official ballots are prepared by the board of election commissioners in each of Michigan's 83 counties, who are required to print at least 25% more ballots than the number of votes cast at the corresponding election held four years previously for the office that received the greatest number of votes.

MCL 168.689a

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would result in increased costs to counties and certain local governments that may pay for costs of printing, due to added printing costs of security features, including color inks and microprinting. Additional costs would depend on the type of security features used and the number of ballots printed. Per ballot printing costs vary according to the number of ballots ordered to be printed, ranging from approximately 60 cents per ballot for 500 to 20 cents per ballot for 500,000. The costs of additional security features would vary slightly and be more fixed, thereby making total cost percentage increases greater for counties or cities with more registered electors. Approximate cost increases of certain security features are provided in the table below, with an estimate of the corresponding cost increase for an order of 100,000 printed ballots. Other potential security features not included in the table also may be used. The average number of registered electors in Michigan counties in 2020 was 92,129, and the median number was 29,311.

<u>Security Feature</u>	<u>Estimated Cost Per Ballot</u>	<u>Total Estimated Increase Per 100,000 Ballots</u>
Colored Ink	0.1 cent	\$100
Black Light Code	5 - 10 cents	\$5,000 - \$10,000
Watermarked Paper	10 cents	\$10,000
Foil Stamping	Varies according to added printing time	Indeterminate
Microprinting	Indeterminate	Indeterminate

Microprinting may require the state's three election tabulator manufacturers to incorporate microprinting capabilities in their software functionality for ballot designing. Any potential fiscal impact to these vendors and subsequent software service price adjustments to local government units is indeterminate at this time. Depending on the size of microprinted content on ballots, the number of printers capable of producing the ballots would be limited and may also impact ballot costs.

The bill would not have a fiscal impact on the state.

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