

# Multiple Agency Fiscal Note Summary

|                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Bill Number:</b> 5890 E S SB | <b>Title:</b> Ballot rejection |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|

## Estimated Cash Receipts

NONE

## Estimated Operating Expenditures

| Agency Name                      | 2023-25    |                |                |                | 2025-27    |              |              |              | 2027-29    |          |             |          |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|
|                                  | FTEs       | GF-State       | NGF-Outlook    | Total          | FTEs       | GF-State     | NGF-Outlook  | Total        | FTEs       | GF-State | NGF-Outlook | Total    |
| Office of the Secretary of State | .5         | 124,782        | 124,782        | 124,782        | .0         | 0            | 0            | 0            | .0         | 0        | 0           | 0        |
| University of Washington         | .0         | 9,694          | 9,694          | 9,694          | .0         | 9,694        | 9,694        | 9,694        | .0         | 0        | 0           | 0        |
| <b>Total \$</b>                  | <b>0.5</b> | <b>134,476</b> | <b>134,476</b> | <b>134,476</b> | <b>0.0</b> | <b>9,694</b> | <b>9,694</b> | <b>9,694</b> | <b>0.0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b> |

| Agency Name         | 2023-25                                                                |          |       | 2025-27 |          |       | 2027-29 |          |       |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|
|                     | FTEs                                                                   | GF-State | Total | FTEs    | GF-State | Total | FTEs    | GF-State | Total |
| Local Gov. Courts   |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Loc School dist-SPI |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Local Gov. Other    | Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion. |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Local Gov. Total    |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |

## Estimated Capital Budget Expenditures

| Agency Name                      | 2023-25    |          |          | 2025-27    |          |          | 2027-29    |          |          |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|
|                                  | FTEs       | Bonds    | Total    | FTEs       | Bonds    | Total    | FTEs       | Bonds    | Total    |
| Office of the Secretary of State | .0         | 0        | 0        | .0         | 0        | 0        | .0         | 0        | 0        |
| University of Washington         | .0         | 0        | 0        | .0         | 0        | 0        | .0         | 0        | 0        |
| <b>Total \$</b>                  | <b>0.0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0.0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0.0</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b> |

| Agency Name         | 2023-25                                                                |          |       | 2025-27 |          |       | 2027-29 |          |       |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|---------|----------|-------|
|                     | FTEs                                                                   | GF-State | Total | FTEs    | GF-State | Total | FTEs    | GF-State | Total |
| Local Gov. Courts   |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Loc School dist-SPI |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Local Gov. Other    | Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion. |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |
| Local Gov. Total    |                                                                        |          |       |         |          |       |         |          |       |

## Estimated Capital Budget Breakout

NONE

**Prepared by:** Cheri Keller, OFM

**Phone:**  
(360) 584-2207

**Date Published:**  
Final 2/13/2024

# Individual State Agency Fiscal Note

|                                 |                                |                                                     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bill Number:</b> 5890 E S SB | <b>Title:</b> Ballot rejection | <b>Agency:</b> 085-Office of the Secretary of State |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

## Part I: Estimates

**No Fiscal Impact**

### Estimated Cash Receipts to:

NONE

### Estimated Operating Expenditures from:

|                          | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| FTE Staff Years          | 0.0     | 1.0     | 0.5     | 0.0     | 0.0     |
| <b>Account</b>           |         |         |         |         |         |
| General Fund-State 001-1 | 0       | 124,782 | 124,782 | 0       | 0       |
| <b>Total \$</b>          | 0       | 124,782 | 124,782 | 0       | 0       |

### Estimated Capital Budget Impact:

NONE

*The cash receipts and expenditure estimates on this page represent the most likely fiscal impact. Factors impacting the precision of these estimates, and alternate ranges (if appropriate), are explained in Part II.*

Check applicable boxes and follow corresponding instructions:

- If fiscal impact is greater than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete entire fiscal note form Parts I-V.
- If fiscal impact is less than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete this page only (Part I).
- Capital budget impact, complete Part IV.
- Requires new rule making, complete Part V.

|                                    |                       |                  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Legislative Contact: Connor Schiff | Phone: 360-786-7093   | Date: 02/06/2024 |
| Agency Preparation: Bonnie Luntzel | Phone: 360-570-5575   | Date: 02/06/2024 |
| Agency Approval: Mike Woods        | Phone: (360) 704-5215 | Date: 02/06/2024 |
| OFM Review: Cheri Keller           | Phone: (360) 584-2207 | Date: 02/06/2024 |

## Part II: Narrative Explanation

### II. A - Brief Description Of What The Measure Does That Has Fiscal Impact

*Significant provisions of the bill and any related workload or policy assumptions that have revenue or expenditure impact on the responding agency by section number.*

Changes in ESSB 5890 compared to previous version (SSB 5890)

Would add Section 1(5) which requires the auditor to contact the voter if the voter's ballot is rejected in two consecutive primary or general elections due to a mismatched signature.

Summary:

Sec. 1. Requires the auditor to notify the voter by telephone, using the voter registration record information, if the ballot is received within five business days, rather than 3, of the final meeting of the canvassing board.

Sec. 3 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW.

Sec. 3(1)(a) would require the secretary of state to adopt and review statewide signature verification standards to confirm the ballot declaration signatures match the signature on the voter registration record,

Sec. 3(1)(b) would require the secretary of state to adopt, publish, and regularly update a training manual.

Sec. 3(1)(c) would require the secretary of state to design and implement tools to ensure compliance with voter signature verification standards.

Sec. 4 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW and require the secretary of state to design forms for voters to complete incomplete ballot declarations in the various languages required of state agencies. The form has specific requirements and county auditors will publish these forms on the county auditor's website and in the county auditor's office.

Sec. 9(13) and 10(12) would encourage the secretary of state to design voter registration forms with multiple signature blocks.

Sec. 11 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW and require the establishment of a work group, chaired by the secretary of state, or the secretary's designee, to approve a uniform ballot envelope design for use beginning in the 2026 primary.

### II. B - Cash receipts Impact

*Cash receipts impact of the legislation on the responding agency with the cash receipts provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of the revenue sources. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the cash receipts impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.*

### II. C - Expenditures

*Agency expenditures necessary to implement this legislation (or savings resulting from this legislation), with the provisions of the legislation that result in the expenditures (or savings) identified by section number. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the expenditure impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into cost estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.*

Sect. 3: OSOS adopts, publishes and reviews statewide signature verification standards, training and materials as part of our current processes. No fiscal impact.

Sec.4: OSOS would require hire 1 FTE (196G, 48L - Graphic Designer Senior) for a one-year project (FY2025), to assist the Office in the design of the ballot curing forms for voters to use in completing incomplete ballot declarations, in the various languages required of state agencies. In this connection, the OSOS estimates that it will cost \$125,000 for the FTE

and related costs.

Sect. 11: OSOS expects the work group to convene in January of 2025 and assumes the meetings would occur remotely and in the course of the participants' official duties. No fiscal impact.

**Part III: Expenditure Detail**

**III. A - Operating Budget Expenditures**

| Account         | Account Title | Type  | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 001-1           | General Fund  | State | 0       | 124,782 | 124,782 | 0       | 0       |
| <b>Total \$</b> |               |       | 0       | 124,782 | 124,782 | 0       | 0       |

**III. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose**

|                                      | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| FTE Staff Years                      |         | 1.0     | 0.5     |         |         |
| A-Salaries and Wages                 |         | 64,092  | 64,092  |         |         |
| B-Employee Benefits                  |         | 26,284  | 26,284  |         |         |
| C-Professional Service Contracts     |         |         |         |         |         |
| E-Goods and Other Services           |         | 5,850   | 5,850   |         |         |
| G-Travel                             |         | 2,500   | 2,500   |         |         |
| J-Capital Outlays                    |         | 12,500  | 12,500  |         |         |
| M-Inter Agency/Fund Transfers        |         |         |         |         |         |
| N-Grants, Benefits & Client Services |         |         |         |         |         |
| P-Debt Service                       |         |         |         |         |         |
| S-Interagency Reimbursements         |         |         |         |         |         |
| T-Intra-Agency Reimbursements        |         | 13,556  | 13,556  |         |         |
| 9-                                   |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Total \$</b>                      | 0       | 124,782 | 124,782 | 0       | 0       |

**III. C - Operating FTE Detail:** *List FTEs by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals need to agree with total FTEs in Part I and Part IIIA*

| Job Classification      | Salary | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Graphic Designer Senior | 64,092 |         | 1.0     | 0.5     |         |         |
| <b>Total FTEs</b>       |        |         | 1.0     | 0.5     |         | 0.0     |

**III. D - Expenditures By Program (optional)**

NONE

**Part IV: Capital Budget Impact**

**IV. A - Capital Budget Expenditures**

NONE

**IV. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose**

NONE

**IV. C - Capital Budget Breakout**

*Acquisition and construction costs not reflected elsewhere on the fiscal note and description of potential financing methods.*

NONE

**IV. D - Capital FTE Detail:** *FTEs listed by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals agree with total FTEs in Part IVB.*

NONE

**Part V: New Rule Making Required**

*Provisions of the bill that require the agency to adopt new administrative rules or repeal/revise existing rules.*

# Individual State Agency Fiscal Note

|                                 |                                |                                             |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bill Number:</b> 5890 E S SB | <b>Title:</b> Ballot rejection | <b>Agency:</b> 360-University of Washington |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|

## Part I: Estimates

No Fiscal Impact

### Estimated Cash Receipts to:

NONE

### Estimated Operating Expenditures from:

|                               | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| FTE Staff Years               | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     |
| <b>Account</b>                |         |         |         |         |         |
| General Fund-State      001-1 | 0       | 9,694   | 9,694   | 9,694   | 0       |
| <b>Total \$</b>               | 0       | 9,694   | 9,694   | 9,694   | 0       |

### Estimated Capital Budget Impact:

NONE

*The cash receipts and expenditure estimates on this page represent the most likely fiscal impact. Factors impacting the precision of these estimates, and alternate ranges (if appropriate), are explained in Part II.*

Check applicable boxes and follow corresponding instructions:

- If fiscal impact is greater than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete entire fiscal note form Parts I-V.
- If fiscal impact is less than \$50,000 per fiscal year in the current biennium or in subsequent biennia, complete this page only (Part I).
- Capital budget impact, complete Part IV.
- Requires new rule making, complete Part V.

|                                    |                       |                  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Legislative Contact: Connor Schiff | Phone: 360-786-7093   | Date: 02/06/2024 |
| Agency Preparation: Michael Lantz  | Phone: 2065437466     | Date: 02/08/2024 |
| Agency Approval: Michael Lantz     | Phone: 2065437466     | Date: 02/08/2024 |
| OFM Review: Ramona Nabors          | Phone: (360) 742-8948 | Date: 02/09/2024 |

## Part II: Narrative Explanation

### II. A - Brief Description Of What The Measure Does That Has Fiscal Impact

Significant provisions of the bill and any related workload or policy assumptions that have revenue or expenditure impact on the responding agency by section number.

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5890 relates to efforts to reduce election ballot rejection rates. While the engrossed substitute has been amended from previous versions, the provisions affecting the University of Washington (UW) have not changed. Therefore, the UW is submitting the same fiscal note.

Section 11 is relevant to the UW and requires the establishment of a workgroup to approve a uniform ballot envelopment design to be used by all counties starting with the 2026 primary election. The work group will be chaired by the Secretary of State's Office but is required to include a representative from the UW's Evans School of Public Policy and Governance. This provision sunsets on January 1, 2027.

### II. B - Cash receipts Impact

Cash receipts impact of the legislation on the responding agency with the cash receipts provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of the revenue sources. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the cash receipts impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

### II. C - Expenditures

Agency expenditures necessary to implement this legislation (or savings resulting from this legislation), with the provisions of the legislation that result in the expenditures (or savings) identified by section number. Description of the factual basis of the assumptions and the method by which the expenditure impact is derived. Explanation of how workload assumptions translate into cost estimates. Distinguished between one time and ongoing functions.

The UW generally assumes participation by a faculty or staff member in a work group will require .03 of an FTE per year. This estimate includes time for a monthly one-hour meeting as well as time for preparation or travel. The work group is scheduled to sunset on January 1, 2027. However, it is expected that the work group will complete most of its work before then and therefore any costs to the University in FY27 can be absorbed using existing resources.

Overall, the impact to the UW from this measure is under \$50,000.

## Part III: Expenditure Detail

### III. A - Operating Budget Expenditures

| Account         | Account Title | Type  | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 001-1           | General Fund  | State | 0       | 9,694   | 9,694   | 9,694   | 0       |
| <b>Total \$</b> |               |       | 0       | 9,694   | 9,694   | 9,694   | 0       |

### III. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose

|                                      | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| FTE Staff Years                      |         | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     |         |
| A-Salaries and Wages                 |         | 7,907   | 7,907   | 7,907   |         |
| B-Employee Benefits                  |         | 1,787   | 1,787   | 1,787   |         |
| C-Professional Service Contracts     |         |         |         |         |         |
| E-Goods and Other Services           |         |         |         |         |         |
| G-Travel                             |         |         |         |         |         |
| J-Capital Outlays                    |         |         |         |         |         |
| M-Inter Agency/Fund Transfers        |         |         |         |         |         |
| N-Grants, Benefits & Client Services |         |         |         |         |         |
| P-Debt Service                       |         |         |         |         |         |
| S-Interagency Reimbursements         |         |         |         |         |         |
| T-Intra-Agency Reimbursements        |         |         |         |         |         |
| 9-                                   |         |         |         |         |         |
| <b>Total \$</b>                      | 0       | 9,694   | 9,694   | 9,694   | 0       |

**III. C - Operating FTE Detail:** *List FTEs by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals need to agree with total FTEs in Part I and Part IIIA*

| Job Classification | Salary  | FY 2024 | FY 2025 | 2023-25 | 2025-27 | 2027-29 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Professor          | 263,578 |         | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     |         |
| <b>Total FTEs</b>  |         |         | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     | 0.0     |

**III. D - Expenditures By Program (optional)**

NONE

**Part IV: Capital Budget Impact**

**IV. A - Capital Budget Expenditures**

NONE

**IV. B - Expenditures by Object Or Purpose**

NONE

**IV. C - Capital Budget Breakout**

*Acquisition and construction costs not reflected elsewhere on the fiscal note and description of potential financing methods.*

NONE

**IV. D - Capital FTE Detail:** *FTEs listed by classification and corresponding annual compensation. Totals agree with total FTEs in Part IVB.*

NONE

**Part V: New Rule Making Required**

*Provisions of the bill that require the agency to adopt new administrative rules or repeal/revise existing rules.*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL NOTE

Department of Commerce

Bill Number: 5890 E S SB

Title: Ballot rejection

## Part I: Jurisdiction-Location, type or status of political subdivision defines range of fiscal impacts.

### Legislation Impacts:

- Cities:
- Counties: Would experience moderate to substantial cost impacts due to amending the voter declaration, which would require counties with pre-printed ballot envelopes to purchase new envelopes with the updated voter declaration.
- Special Districts:
- Specific jurisdictions only: Only counties with a stock of pre-printed ballot envelopes.
- Variance occurs due to: How counties implement voter outreach and education campaigns.

## Part II: Estimates

- No fiscal impacts.
- Expenditures represent one-time costs:
- Legislation provides local option: County auditors would have the option to contact voters to obtain updated signatures after every primary, general and presidential primary election.
- Key variables cannot be estimated with certainty at this time: The number of counties that keep pre-printed ballot envelopes on hand, and the amount of envelopes each county keeps; whether counties will incur costs if they are not in conformance with the bill's requirements; voter outreach and education campaign costs (which will vary by county) and cost savings due to reforming ballot curing procedures.

### Estimated revenue impacts to:

None

### Estimated expenditure impacts to:

**Non-zero but indeterminate cost and/or savings. Please see discussion.**

## Part III: Preparation and Approval

|                                       |                       |                  |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Fiscal Note Analyst: Kate Fernald     | Phone: 564-200-3519   | Date: 02/13/2024 |
| Leg. Committee Contact: Connor Schiff | Phone: 360-786-7093   | Date: 02/06/2024 |
| Agency Approval: Allan Johnson        | Phone: 360-725-5033   | Date: 02/13/2024 |
| OFM Review: Cheri Keller              | Phone: (360) 584-2207 | Date: 02/13/2024 |

## **Part IV: Analysis**

### **A. SUMMARY OF BILL**

*Description of the bill with an emphasis on how it impacts local government.*

This fiscal note compares ESSB 5890 to SSB 5890.

#### **CHANGES BETWEEN THIS VERSION AND PREVIOUS BILL VERSION:**

The engrossed second substitute version of the bill would require auditors to amend the voter declaration that is printed on ballot envelopes, and would require auditors to mail a notice as well as call, text or email a voter when a voter's ballot needs curing.

#### **SUMMARY OF CURRENT BILL:**

The proposed legislation would update processes with the goal of reducing ballot rejection rates through updates to ballot curing, canvassing, reporting, and outreach processes.

Sec. 1 would amend RCW 29A.60.165.

Sec. 1 (1-2) would require county auditors to notify a voter by phone, text, or email, regarding the cure of a rejected ballot, if the ballot is received within five business days, rather than three business days, of the final canvassing meeting.

Sec. 1 (3) would require auditors to leave a voice mail message when the auditor calls a voter who neglected to sign the ballot declaration or whose signature on the ballot declaration does not match the signature in the registration file and the voter does not answer, but voice mail is available.

Sec. 1 (4) Any auditor who provides electronic means for submission of a ballot declaration signature would be required to establish appropriate protocols that ensure that the information transmitted is received directly and securely by the auditor and is only used for the stated purposes of verifying the signature on the voter's ballot.

Sec. 1 (5) would amend ballot curing procedures. If a voter neglects to sign a ballot declaration, or the voter's signature does not match the signature on the registration file, the county auditor would be required to notify the voter by first-class mail and by phone, text or email if the voter's contact information is on file.

If the voter has been notified by first-class mail and has not responded at least five business days before the final meeting of the canvassing board, or if the voter's ballot with a missing or mismatched signature is received within five business days of the final meeting of the canvassing board, then the county auditor must attempt to notify the voter by phone, text, or email.

If the auditor calls a voter and the voter does not answer, the auditor must leave a voice mail message, if voice mail is available.

Sec. 2 would add a new section to chapter 29A.08 RCW. After certification of general, primary, and presidential primary election results, county auditors would be encouraged to contact each registered voter to obtain an updated signature for the voter's registration file, rather than after every election as the original bill proposed.

Sec. 4 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW to specify that the Secretary of State shall design voter forms, and the county auditors must provide them on their websites and in their offices.

Sec. 5 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW requiring each county auditor to develop an outreach plan to educate voters on ballot signatures and ballot processing. Materials must be produced in English, Spanish, and any other language required by the federal Voting Rights Act, rather than the languages required of state agencies per the original version of the bill.

Sec. 6 would amend RCW 29A.40.091 to add one requirement to the declaration requirements (that signature declarations

will be compared to the signature on file).

Sec. 7 would amend RCW 29A.40.110 to require each county auditor to publish on its website the names of all canvassing board members who received training on statewide standards for signature verification, and the date each person completed the training.

Sec. 8 would amend RCW 29A.60.140 to require County Canvassing Board Meetings to be published notices be published in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, as opposed to the county's website, in libraries and in other community locations, as specified by the first version of the bill. The substitute bill would still require meetings to be conducted at times and locations accessible to the public.

Sec. 11 would add a new section to chapter 29A.60 RCW that would require counties to use uniform ballots designed by the uniform ballot workgroup by the 2026 primary election.

## **B. SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE IMPACTS**

*Expenditure impacts of the legislation on local governments with the expenditure provisions identified by section number and when appropriate, the detail of expenditures. Delineated between city, county and special district impacts.*

### **CHANGES IN EXPENDITURE IMPACTS BETWEEN THIS VERSION AND PREVIOUS BILL VERSION:**

The engrossed second substitute version of the bill would require auditors to amend the voter declaration that is printed on ballot envelopes, resulting in indeterminate expenditure impacts for counties.

### **EXPENDITURE IMPACTS OF CURRENT BILL:**

County election offices would incur indeterminate expenditure impacts due to changing the voter declaration that is printed on ballot envelopes. Please see the discussion below. Additionally, Washington State Association of County Auditors (WSACA) notes that counties would experience varying costs for implementing the legislation's required voter outreach and education campaigns, but WSACA also anticipates that such costs would be minimal and partially offset by the efficiencies gained by the bill's changes to ballot curing procedures.

### **AMENDING THE VOTER DECLARATION:**

Counties' cost impact of changing the voter declaration, which is printed on the ballot envelope, is indeterminate but directly related to the bill's implementation date. The engrossed second substitute version of the bill would take effect 90 days after signing; however, by that point, counties expect they will most likely have already mailed their primary election ballots, which would have the unchanged voter declaration printed on the ballot envelopes, according to Washington State Association of County Auditors (WSACA). Therefore, counties are expected to be out of compliance with the requirements of the bill by the time the bill takes effect. As such, counties cannot comply with the requirements of the proposed legislation as written. Without adding a take effect date for amending the voter declaration, it is not known if counties would incur any legal costs based upon voter declarations that would not conform with the requirements of the bill. Potential legal costs cannot be anticipated in advance and are indeterminate.

If a take effect date were added for updating the voter declaration, counties' cost impacts could be reduced. The further out the implementation date is pushed, the less the cost impact would be for counties, as counties would use up the pre-printed envelopes they have on hand. If the take effect date for this section were January 1, 2026, WSACA anticipates counties would not experience any cost impacts to amending the voter declaration, as all counties will have gone through the pre-printed envelope stock they may have had on hand, and all would need to order new ballot envelopes anyway.

WSACA also reports that many counties keep a stock of pre-printed ballot envelopes. That stock would need to be replaced with new ballot envelopes that have the new voter declaration printed on them. According to WSACA, some counties only have enough envelopes for their next upcoming election, but others may have up to a year or two years' worth of pre-printed envelopes. The number of counties that keep stock on hand, and the amount of stock each county keeps is unknown. Due to the variance in counties' stock of pre-printed envelopes, WSACA anticipates that counties could experience a moderate (\$50,000 to \$1,000,000) to substantial (\$1,000,000 to \$50,000,000) cost impact for replacing

their pre-printed envelopes; however, until additional information is available, the expenditure impact is indeterminate.

#### CURRENT BALLOT CURING:

If a voter neglects to sign a ballot declaration or the voter's signature does not match the signature on their registration file, there is a process in place to help voters correct their ballots, and that process is called ballot curing. Washington's current ballot curing process requires county auditors to notify the voter by first-class mail to advise the voter of the correct procedures for completing the unsigned declaration or updating their signature on the voter registration file. If the ballot is received within three business days of the final meeting of the canvassing board, or the voter has been notified by first-class mail and has not responded at least three business days before the meeting, then the auditor must attempt to notify the voter by telephone.

#### PROPOSED BALLOT CURING:

While the engrossed substitute version of the bill would require counties to continue their current practice of mailing a ballot curing notification to voters when their ballot requires curing, it would also require election offices to conduct outreach via phone, email or text, if the voter's contact information is on file. WSACA expects this change in ballot curing procedures would ultimately save them time, and would allow them to reach overseas and out-of-state voters sooner. However, exact cost savings cannot be predicted in advance, so the associated expenditure reductions are indeterminate.

#### VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS:

Counties would experience indeterminate and varying costs for implementing the legislation's required voter outreach and education campaigns, but WSACA expects these costs would be offset by the efficiencies gained by the bill's changes to ballot curing.

The bill would require all county auditors to develop an outreach plan to educate voters on ballot signatures and ballot processing. Each county would determine its own outreach and education plan likely based on a number of variables, according to WSACA. Due to the wide variance from county to county, counties' costs to implement voter outreach and education campaigns are indeterminate but expected to be minimal. WSACA anticipates the cost-savings associated with amended ballot curing procedures would off-set the potential cost impacts of voter outreach and education campaigns, resulting in an overall de minimis impact.

#### TRANSLATION REQUIREMENTS:

Sec. 5 would require each county auditor to develop an outreach plan to educate voters on ballot signatures and ballot processing. The bill stipulates that materials must be produced in English, Spanish, and any other language required by the federal Voting Rights Act.

According to the Washington Secretary of State's (SOS's) Election Division, counties with minority groups that meet the conditions outlined by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act are required to provide voting materials in the languages of those minority groups. As of January 2024, Washington state has four counties that meet Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act's requirements: King, Yakima, Franklin and Adams, according to the SOS's website "Language Access for Voters." All four of these counties already provide voting materials in Spanish, as noted on the SOS's website. Because these four counties would not have to alter their current practices, they would not incur new costs as a result of the legislation. Therefore, they will not be included in the cost calculations for this fiscal note.\*

The Voting Rights Act does not require any of Washington's remaining 35 counties to print their voting materials in any language other than English. However, the bill would require them to print their voter outreach and education materials for ballot signatures and ballot processing in Spanish. So, per the terms of the proposed legislation, 35 counties would be required to print their voter outreach and education materials in one new language: Spanish.

**TRANSLATION COSTS:**

County election offices could incur indeterminate but likely minimal costs for translating ballot signatures and ballot processing materials into Spanish, according to WSACA.

WSACA contacted a Language Outreach & Community Engagement Supervisor who noted that the translation costs will vary depending on the frequency with which voter outreach is conducted, and how the voter outreach is performed. WSACA anticipates that costs for translating materials will be negligible compared to the costs of developing the material in the first place.

**C. SUMMARY OF REVENUE IMPACTS**

*Revenue impacts of the legislation on local governments, with the revenue provisions identified by section number, and when appropriate, the detail of revenue sources. Delineated between city, county and special district impacts.*

**CHANGES IN REVENUE IMPACTS BETWEEN THIS VERSION AND PREVIOUS BILL VERSION:**

The substitute version of the bill does not change local governments' revenue impact.

**REVENUE IMPACTS OF CURRENT BILL:**

The proposed legislation would not impact local governments' revenue.

**SOURCES:**

King County Elections 2022 Language Access Report  
Office of the Secretary of State's Election Division  
Office of the Secretary of State's "Language Access for Voters"  
Senate Bill Report SSB 5890 (2024)  
Washington State Association of County Auditors