



SOUTH CAROLINA REVENUE AND FISCAL AFFAIRS OFFICE

STATEMENT OF ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT

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This fiscal impact statement is produced in compliance with the South Carolina Code of Laws and House and Senate rules. The focus of the analysis is on governmental expenditure and revenue impacts and may not provide a comprehensive summary of the legislation.

Bill Number:	S. 0037	Introduced on January 14, 2025
Subject:	Municipal Elections	
Requestor:	Senate Judiciary	
RFA Analyst(s):	Welsh	
Impact Date:	January 27, 2025	

Fiscal Impact Summary

This bill specifies the allowable times when a general election must be set for municipalities and when the term for the mayor and councilmen will commence after the certification of the election results. This bill also allows municipalities to transfer the authority for conducting elections to the county board of voter registration and elections.

This bill will have no expenditure impact to the State Election Commission (SEC) as it anticipates it will be able to manage any additional responsibilities of this bill within existing appropriations.

The Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office (RFA) contacted the Municipal Association of South Carolina (MASC) and all counties to determine the local expenditure impact of this bill. Based on MASC's response, the local expenditure impact for municipalities is undetermined, dependent upon potential legal challenges from those impacted by changes to the length of elected officials' terms in office, shifting costs associated with conducting and certifying elections, and potential savings from fewer legal challenges in localities where commencement of terms are not currently specified by ordinance. Additionally, based on responses from Beaufort, Florence, Horry, and Kershaw, the local expenditure impact on counties is expected to be minimal and managed within current appropriations and may result in a savings if the standardization of election dates results in fewer total elections.

Explanation of Fiscal Impact

Introduced on January 14, 2025

State Expenditure

This bill specifies the allowable times when a general election must be set for municipalities and when the term for the mayor and councilmen will commence after the certification of the election results. This bill also allows municipalities to transfer the authority for conducting elections to the county board of voter registration and elections.

SEC anticipates it can manage the additional responsibilities due to this bill with existing staff and within existing appropriations. Therefore, this bill will have no expenditure impact for SEC.

State Revenue

N/A

Local Expenditure

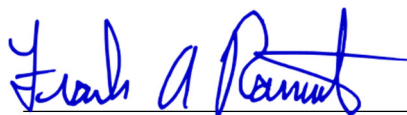
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RFA contacted MASC to determine the local expenditure impact for municipalities. MASC noted that 50 municipalities will be required to amend their current election schedules. MASC anticipates this bill may result in expenses associated with potential legal challenges from parties impacted by the extension or abbreviation to the length of terms of seated municipal elected officials. Additionally, MASC noted that there are only a few municipalities that currently conduct their own elections. If these municipalities decide to allow their local county board of voter registration and elections to conduct the municipal elections, there could be an increase in local expenditures for these municipalities. MASC also noted that the standardization of election dates and terms of office may result in savings from fewer legal challenges or disruption to local governance created by contested elections in municipalities where commencement of terms are not currently specified by ordinance. Therefore, the local expenditure impact for municipalities is undetermined.

RFA also contacted all counties to determine the local expenditure impact for counties. The counties of Beaufort, Florence, Horry, and Kershaw provided a response. All respondents anticipate this bill will have no expenditure impact for their counties and can be managed within current appropriations. Also, Beaufort and Florence counties anticipate the bill may result in savings as it standardizes the dates municipal elections are held and will reduce the total number of separate elections throughout the year.

Local Revenue

N/A



Frank A. Rainwater, Executive Director