



SF 322 – Runoff Primary Election (LSB1090SV)
Analyst: Jennifer Acton (Phone: (515) 281-7846) (jennifer.acton@legis.iowa.gov)
Fiscal Note Version – New

Description

Senate File 322 requires a primary runoff election in the event of an inconclusive primary election for county offices, statewide offices, congressional offices, and members of the General Assembly. An inconclusive primary occurs when an insufficient number of candidates receive at least 35.0% of the vote in a primary election to fill the necessary number of nominations for an office. The runoff election is to be held four weeks after the primary election. The Bill takes effect July 1, 2015 (FY 2016).

Background

- Under current law for an inconclusive primary election, the winner is determined by the applicable delegates at convention and expenses are paid by the applicable political party.
- Eleven states have provisions for primary runoff elections: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Vermont. Vermont holds runoffs only in the event of a tie, and South Dakota only holds runoffs for the offices of U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, and Governor.

Assumptions

- There are 1,775 voting precincts in Iowa.
- Precinct workers are paid an average of \$8.50 per hour plus travel reimbursement, training, and supplies. Travel costs in rural precincts will be higher than urban precincts. Each precinct has approximately five workers working a 16-hour day.
- The cost per ballot is \$0.25.
- The cost for postage and envelopes per absentee ballot is \$1.68.
- County election administration costs are estimated to be \$30 per hour, per person, including base pay, overtime pay, and benefits.
- Publication cost per county is \$2,000.
- The voting equipment programming cost per county is \$3,000.
- The calculations assume 25.0% voter turnout.
- The average cost per precinct is estimated to be \$1,450.
- Some county supervisors are elected “at large” by the entire county and some are elected by a specific district within the county. The smallest district is assumed to include seven precincts.
- Primary runoff elections happen infrequently, but are assumed to happen more frequently at the county level, rather than the State or congressional level.

Fiscal Impact

All costs for a primary runoff election will be paid at the county level. The effect on county expenditures will depend on the number of precincts involved. Costs range from approximately \$10,000 for seven precincts in a county local election for a specific County Board of Supervisor seat to \$2.6 million for a statewide election such as Secretary of Agriculture or Attorney General.

In the event of a statewide primary runoff, the Secretary of State's Office will incur approximately \$35,000 in costs for additional computer programming and staff overtime expenses. These costs will come from the General Fund appropriation.

Sources

Secretary of State
Iowa Association of Counties

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

March 2, 2015

The fiscal note for this bill was prepared pursuant to [Joint Rule 17](#) and the Iowa Code. Data used in developing this fiscal note is available from the Fiscal Services Division of the Legislative Services Agency upon request.
