



Legislative
Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Initiative # 104

INITIAL FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Date: December 31, 2019

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

LCS TITLE: APPROVAL VOTING

Disclaimer. *This initial fiscal impact statement has been prepared for the Title Board. If the initiative is placed on the ballot, Legislative Council Staff may revise this estimate for the ballot information booklet (Blue Book) if new information becomes available.*

Summary of Measure

Initiative 104 implements approval voting in all Colorado elections conducted under the state, municipal, or local government election codes. Approval voting is a voting method that allows a voter to cast a vote for as many candidates for the office up for election as the voter chooses. The winner of each office is the candidate that receives the most votes. For elections with multiple open seats that must be filled, the winners are the top candidates that received the most votes equal to the number of seats being filled.

State Expenditures

Starting in FY 2021-22, the measure minimally increases workload for state agencies as described below.

Department of State. The bill increases workload in the Department of State to draft rules and provide guidance to county clerks and other local election officials on implementation of approval voting. It is assumed that any increase in workload will decrease over time after the initial transition to approval voting and that this work can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

Department of Local Affairs. Currently, local governments and special districts file their election results with the Department of Local Affairs. This bill creates a one-time minimal increase in workload to update local government and special district election forms and publications. It is assumed that workload will also increase for the Department of Local Affairs to collaborate with the Department of State on the creation of approval voting rules, particularly the submission of election results. This workload can be accomplished within existing appropriations.

Local Government

Initiative 104 increases workload and costs for counties, municipalities, and other local governments to update election policies, procedures, forms, and to communicate the changes to voters. Costs will also be incurred to reprogram vote counting machines. To the extent that approval voting increases the length of the ballot, ballot printing and mailing costs may also increase.

Economic Impact

The use of approval voting could alter the strategies used by candidates for public office in Colorado, which could potentially change the amount, timing, and nature of spending on political advertising and other related services. It is assumed that the overall economic impact from these changes will be minimal.

Effective Date

If approved by voters at the 2020 general election, this measure takes effect January 1, 2022.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Local Affairs
Secretary of State

County Clerks
Municipalities
Special Districts

Information Technology
School Districts

Abstract of Initiative 104: APPROVAL VOTING

The abstract includes estimates of the fiscal impact of the proposed initiative. If this initiative is to be placed on the ballot, Legislative Council Staff will prepare new estimates as part of a fiscal impact statement, which includes an abstract of that information. All fiscal impact statements are available at www.ColoradoBlueBook.com and the abstract will be included in the ballot information booklet that is prepared for the initiative.

This initial fiscal estimate, prepared by the nonpartisan Director of Research of the Legislative Council as of December 31, 2019, identifies the following impacts:

State expenditures. The bill minimally increases workload in the Department of State and the Department of Local Affairs to update elections rules and procedures and to provide guidance to counties and local governments on the use of approval voting.

Local government impact. Initiative 104 increases workload and costs for counties, municipalities, and other local governments to update election policies, procedures, forms, and to communicate the changes to voters concerning the shift to approval voting. Costs will also be incurred to reprogram vote counting machines. To the extent that approval voting increases the length of the ballot, ballot printing and mailing costs may also increase.

Economic impacts. The use of approval voting could alter the strategies used by candidates for public office in Colorado, which could potentially change the amount, timing, and nature of spending on political advertising and other related services. It is assumed that the overall economic impact from these changes will be minimal.