

BILL # SB 1065

TITLE: ballot counting; security cameras

SPONSOR: Harper

STATUS: As Introduced

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FISCAL ANALYSIS

Description

The bill requires that, for each election, live video recording be completed for all ballots from the time that they arrive at the counting center until all ballots are tabulated. This live video footage is then to be transmitted to the Secretary of State and posted to the Secretary's Web site.

Estimated Impact

The bill has an estimated General Fund cost of \$720,000 in FY 2008 for bandwidth costs in the Secretary of State's office.

The bill will also have a fiscal impact on each county, city, and town that conducts its own elections. However, it is difficult to calculate an aggregate local impact amount due to data limitations.

Neither the Secretary of State's office nor the local entities were able to provide comprehensive information on the existing technology capabilities and resources of the counties, cities, and towns that would be impacted by this bill.

Analysis

Each of the 15 counties would be required to transmit live video feed to the Secretary of State to be posted on the Secretary's Web site for each election that the county conducts. Receiving and posting these videos will require additional bandwidth for the Secretary's Web site. The Secretary of State's office estimates that this increased bandwidth will cost between \$18,000 and \$66,000 per county each year. The estimated average cost is \$48,000 per county annually or a cumulative total of \$720,000 for the 15 counties.

In addition to bandwidth requirements associated with receiving video feed from the 15 counties for state and county elections, the Secretary of State's office must also be capable of receiving video from cities and towns for local elections. Most cities and towns and all school boards contract with their county to conduct elections. The Arizona League of Cities and Towns estimates that 10% to 20% of cities and towns (9 to 18) conduct their own elections and do not contract with the county. However, due to the timing of these elections, it is estimated that there will not be any additional bandwidth required to receive and post videos of local elections from these entities.

Because bandwidth is established on a yearly basis, the Secretary of State's office reports that the level will remain constant and cannot be adjusted downward in months when there are no elections taking place.

Local Government Impact

In addition to costs for bandwidth in the Secretary of State's office, there are additional costs associated with equipment, software, and internet connectivity that may have a fiscal impact on local governments. The bill would affect all counties and all cities or towns that conduct their own elections. It is estimated that there are between 24 and 33 political entities that would be impacted, 15 counties and 9 to 18 cities and towns. Each political entity would need a web camera capable of capturing video feed. While the larger counties may already have this equipment, the number of entities that would have to purchase a web camera cannot be determined from available information. Legislative Computer Services estimates that this equipment can cost between \$10,000 for a high quality camera with zoom capabilities to under \$100 for a recreational camera with low picture quality. There could also be added costs associated with software, installation, system upgrades, and IT support estimated by the Arizona League of Cities and Towns to be \$100,000. Additionally, the number of counties that

currently have internet access in their ballot counting facilities cannot be determined from available information. To the extent that counties or cities would need to establish internet access to comply with this bill, there may be additional internet installation and usage costs for those entities. It is also possible that counties may raise the fee they charge cities, towns, and school districts to conduct their elections to offset these costs.

1/24/07