

# Fiscal Note

**BILL #** HB 2304

**TITLE:** voting locations; precinct-based

**SPONSOR:** McGarr

**STATUS:** House Engrossed

**PREPARED BY:** Micaela Larkin

## Description

The bill would require that for all elections administered by a county, voting is required to be conducted at precinct-based polling places. The bill would eliminate to use of voting centers, which are locations that can be used by voters who reside anywhere within the county.

## Estimated Impact

The bill is estimated to increase total county election spending by \$1.3 million for each regularly-scheduled election (such as a statewide primary or general election). This estimate assumes that in order to comply with the "precinct-based polling places" requirement, that every county locates at least one voting location in each currently established precinct. The fiscal impact could be lower if counties use combined precincts, where several precincts are served by one voting location – that combined system could potentially comply with the bill's mandate to use "precinct-based polling places" while also not violating the bill's prohibition on voting centers.

The potential impact for each county would depend on the county's current number of physical voting locations as compared to the number of locations that would exist under the assumed minimum 1-to-1 precinct/location ratio (see *Table 1* below).

The bill's requirement for additional physical polling locations is not expected to materially impact the usage of mail-in voting. Therefore, we do not expect the counties to realize any savings from reduced mail-in balloting (such as lower postage costs).

We have asked the Secretary of State for an estimate of any costs to their agency for this bill. As of publication, we have not received a response. The Arizona Association of Counties (AACo) provided an estimate that each physical voting location has staffing costs of \$1,200 for one election.

## Analysis

In the year proceeding a General Election, each County Board of Supervisors establishes election precincts based on the state and local election districts. Statute generally presumes there will be one polling place per precinct, although certain counties elect to use more than one voting location per precinct. After considering other factors such as expected in-person voting wait times, statute allows the Board of Supervisors to take the following action: 1) Keep the precinct-based model in general, but combine certain adjacent precincts; 2) Use voting centers in place of the precinct model; or 3) Allow for a hybrid system of precinct locations and voting centers.

For the 2022 General Election, Arizona counties had 1,733 precincts, but operated a total of 721 voting sites (polling places and voting centers) on election day. Assuming the bill would require each county to have a minimum of 1 polling place per precinct, this would result in the counties establishing an additional 1,049 polling locations for each election.

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The Arizona Association of Counties (AACo) has indicated that the staffing costs for each physical voting location is \$1,200 per election. Applying this \$1,200 factor to the 1,049 newly required polling places would result in total county election spending increasing by \$1.3 million. (See *Table 1* below for the newly required sites by county and the associated cost)

The counties would potentially incur other costs for the additional required polling places, but we are not able to specifically quantify those costs. Among those issues are:

- One-time equipment costs for the additional voting locations. New equipment costs may depend on how much equipment from aggregated voting centers can be distributed to the newly required physical locations.
- Challenges finding the additional staff to support the expanded number of physical voting locations. If counties were required to increase wages to election day workers, the staffing cost per location would be higher than the \$1,200 amount used in this analysis.

<b>County</b>	<b>2022 Reported Voting Sites</b>	<b>2022 Reported Precincts</b>	<b>Potential New Voting Sites</b>	<b>Cost of New Voting Sites</b>
Apache	44	44	-	0
Cochise	18	55	37	44,400
Coconino	45	75	30	36,000
Gila	17	39	22	26,400
Graham	9	22	13	15,600
Greenlee	5	8	3	3,600
La Paz	11	11	-	0
Maricopa	223	935	712	854,400
Mohave	36	24	-	0
Navajo	39	14	-	0
Pima	129	278	149	178,800
Pinal	97	109	12	14,400
Santa Cruz	13	24	11	13,200
Yavapai	27	49	22	26,400
Yuma	8	46	<u>38</u>	<u>45,600</u>
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,049</b>	<b>\$1,258,800</b>

In addition to the impacts described above, the bill contemplates additional conforming legislation to implement the new election requirements. Any subsequent legislation that enacts implementing details could change the bill's fiscal impact.