

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

FISCAL NOTE

L.R. No.: 4851S.02C
 Bill No.: SCS for HB 1940
 Subject: Elections; Newspapers and Publications; Political Subdivisions
 Type: Original
 Date: April 20, 2026

Bill Summary: This proposal modifies requirements relating to publication of notices.

FISCAL SUMMARY

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE FUND

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
General Revenue*	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Total Estimated Net Effect on General Revenue	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

*Oversight does not anticipate the cost savings to exceed \$250,000.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON OTHER STATE FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>Other</u> State Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

Numbers within parentheses: () indicate costs or losses.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FEDERAL FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on <u>All</u> Federal Funds	\$0	\$0	\$0

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON FULL TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE)

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Estimated Net Effect on FTE	0	0	0

- Estimated Net Effect (expenditures or reduced revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.
- Estimated Net Effect (savings or increased revenues) expected to exceed \$250,000 in any of the three fiscal years after implementation of the act or at full implementation of the act.

ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL FUNDS

FUND AFFECTED	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Government	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

FISCAL ANALYSIS

ASSUMPTION

Officials from the **Missouri Office of Prosecution Services** did not respond to **Oversight's** request for fiscal impact for this proposal.

§§108.240 and 115.127 – Publication of Notices

Officials from the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)** assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their organization.

In response to similar legislation, HB 2605 (2026), officials from the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)** stated in regard to §115.127 this bill alters the requirements for the publication of election notices. Currently each county election authority must publish notice in two newspapers of opposing political faiths if such newspapers are available. The bill would permit election authorities to satisfy the statutory requirements by publishing in only one newspaper that either publishes in the county or otherwise serves the area. Since the Secretary of State shares proportional costs of primary and general elections, including publication costs, this would result in reduced costs to the state in counties where multiple newspapers are published. Due to the volatility of advertising rates and of the newspaper industry as a whole, the potential savings to the state in odd-numbered fiscal years is unknown.

Oversight notes §115.127.4 states “In lieu of causing legal notice to be published twice in accordance with any of the provisions of this chapter, the election authority may cause legal notice to be mailed within six weeks prior to the election to each registered voter at the voter's voting address and published once in one or more newspapers in the county. An election authority may exclude from this mailing any voter that is designated as an inactive voter pursuant to section 115.193.” Therefore, Oversight assumes this would result in reduced costs to the states proportional share of publication costs. Therefore, Oversight will reflect an unknown savings to SOS in the fiscal note. Oversight does not expect the fiscal impact to exceed the \$250,000 threshold.

In response to similar legislation, HB 2605 (2026), officials from the **Polk County Clerk** stated this proposal will allow local election authorities the ability to still provide notice but in a more cost savings way. In Polk County there is 1 (one) newspaper available. Surrounding newspapers are struggling with the one in the county and do not truly provide the appropriate coverage for Polk County. Having a notice printed in a newspaper outside of the county jurisdiction does not ensure proper notice has been given. It only means that more tax dollars have been spent to have a legal notice published that the voters will not see.

While newspapers have historically been the best source of public information that simply isn't the case today. There are many different types of media outlets that are utilized by the public and a single source could now be considered disenfranchising voters. The ability for a local

election authority to publish a legal notice one time and within the absentee voting window allows for earlier and better notification. Polk County would see a cost savings in legal publications of at least \$2,200 for 2027 & 2029 and \$4,300 for 2028.

Oversight notes the bill would permit election authorities to satisfy the statutory requirements by publishing in only one newspaper that either publishes in the county or otherwise serves the area. Therefore, Oversight will reflect an unknown savings to local election authorities in the fiscal note.

§§115.125, 493.050 and 493.070

Officials from the **Office of Administration, Department of Commerce and Insurance, Department of Economic Development, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Corrections, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Department of Revenue, Department of Public Safety (Office of the Director, Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control, Fire Safety, Missouri Gaming Commission, Missouri Highway Patrol, and Missouri Veterans Commission), Department of Social Services, Office of the Governor, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Transportation, Missouri National Guard, Office of the State Courts Administrator, MoDOT & Patrol Employees' Retirement System, Office of the State Public Defender, Office of the State Treasurer, Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement, Legislative Research, Oversight Division, Missouri Senate, Missouri Lottery Commission, Missouri State Employee's Retirement System, State Tax Commission, Petroleum Storage Tank Insurance Fund, and University of Missouri System** each assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their respective organizations.

Officials from the **Platte County Board of Elections, St. Louis City Board of Elections and St. Louis County Board of Elections** assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their respective agencies.

Oversight notes that the above-mentioned agencies have stated the proposal would not have a direct fiscal impact on their organization. Oversight does not have any information to the contrary. Therefore, Oversight will reflect a zero impact on the fiscal note.

In response to a previous version, officials from **Department of Public Safety (Capitol Police, and State Emergency Management Agency), Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Ethics Commission, Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Office of the State Auditor and Missouri House of Representatives** stated this proposal would have no fiscal impact on their organizations.

In response to a previous version, officials from the **Office of Attorney General (AGO)** assumed any potential litigation costs arising from this proposal can be absorbed with existing

resources. The AGO may seek additional appropriations if the proposal results in a significant increase in litigation or investigation costs.

Oversight does not have any information to the contrary. Therefore, Oversight assumes the AGO will be able to perform any additional duties required by this proposal with current staff and resources and will reflect no fiscal impact to the AGO for fiscal note purposes.

Officials from the **Department of Mental Health** defer to the **Office of Administration** for the potential fiscal impact of this proposal.

Oversight only reflects the responses that we have received from state agencies and political subdivisions; however, other Local Election Authorities, Clerks and Citites were requested to respond to this proposed legislation but did not. Upon the receipt of additional responses, Oversight will review to determine if an updated fiscal note should be prepared and seek the necessary approval to publish a new fiscal note. A general listing of political subdivisions included in our database is available upon request.

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – State Government</u>	FY 2027 (10 Mo.)	FY 2028	FY 2029
GENERAL REVENUE			
<u>Savings – SOS (§115.127) Reduced proportional costs to LEAs for newspaper election notices p.3-4</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON GENERAL REVENUE	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>

<u>FISCAL IMPACT – Local Government</u>	FY 2027 (10 Mo.)	FY 2028	FY 2029
LOCAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS			
<u>Savings – Local Election Authorities (§115.127) Reduced publication costs for newspaper election notices p.3-4</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>
ESTIMATED NET EFFECT ON LOCAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>	<u>Unknown</u>

FISCAL IMPACT – Small Business

No direct fiscal impact on small businesses would be expected as a result of this proposal.

FISCAL DESCRIPTION

This bill provides that, in the case of a bond election, if an election contest is not filed within 30 days after the official announcement of the election result, all conditions of state election law shall be deemed to have been complied with in the issuance of the bond.

This bill modifies provisions relating to the publication of election notices.

This legislation is not federally mandated, would not duplicate any other program and would not require additional capital improvements or rental space.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Attorney General's Office
Office of Administration
Department of Commerce and Insurance
Department of Economic Development
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development
Department of Health and Senior Services
Department of Mental Health
Department of Natural Resources
Department of Corrections
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
Department of Revenue
Department of Public Safety
Office of the Director
Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Control
Capitol Police
Fire Safety
Missouri Gaming Commission
Missouri Highway Patrol
State Emergency Management Agency
Department of Social Services
Office of the Governor
Missouri Department of Agriculture
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Ethics Commission
Missouri Department of Transportation
MoDOT & Patrol Employees' Retirement System

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Office of the State Courts Administrator
Petroleum Storage Tank Insurance Fund
Office of the Secretary of State
Office of the State Public Defender
Office of the State Treasurer
University of Missouri System
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Office of the State Auditor
Missouri House of Representatives
Joint Committee on Administrative Rules
Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement
Legislative Research
Oversight Division
Missouri Senate
Missouri Lottery Commission
Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan
Missouri State Employee's Retirement System
State Tax Commission



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