

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

FISCAL NOTE

L.R. No.: 4851S.02T
 Bill No.: Truly Agreed To and Finally Passed SCS for HB 1940
 Subject: Elections; Newspapers and Publications; Political Subdivisions
 Type: Original
 Date: June 18, 2026

Bill Summary: This proposal modifies provisions 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

§§108.240 and 115.127 – Publication of Notices

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 - Administrative Hearing Commission, 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 Corrections, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Department of Mental Health, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Public Safety (Office of the Director, Alcohol and Tobacco Control, Capitol Police, Fire Safety, Missouri Gaming Commission, Missouri Highway Patrol, Veterans Commission and State Emergency Management Agency), Department of Revenue, Department of Social Services, Office of the Governor, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Transportation, Missouri National Guard, Office of Administration, MoDOT & Patrol Employees' Retirement System, Office of the State Courts Administrator, Office of the Secretary of State, Office of the State Treasurer, Office of the State Auditor, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Office of the State Public Defender, Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, Missouri House of Representatives, Missouri Senate, Joint Committee on Public Employee Retirement, Oversight Division, Missouri Lottery Commission, Missouri State Employee's Retirement System, Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan, State Tax Commission, Kansas City Election Board, Platte County Board of Elections, and St. Louis County Board of Elections** each assume the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their respective organizations.

Officials from the **University of Missouri System** state the proposal will have no significant increase.

In response to a previous version, officials from the **Missouri Office of Prosecution Services, Petroleum Storage Tank Insurance Fund, Legislative Research, and Missouri Ethics Commission** each assumed the proposal will have no fiscal impact on their respective organizations.

In response to a previous version, officials from the **St. Louis City Board of Elections** assumed the proposal would have no fiscal impact on their agency.

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 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 would 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.

Oversight only reflects the responses that we have received from state agencies and political subdivisions; however, other Local Election Authorities, Clerks and Cities 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

PUBLICATION OF NOTICES

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 will be deemed to have been complied with in the issuance of the bond (section 108.240).

The bill allows a notice of election to be sent by email (Section 115.125).

Currently, the first notice of election must be published within two weeks prior to the election, and the second must be published within one week prior to the election. This bill requires both notices to be published within six weeks prior to the election.

Currently, jurisdictions with populations under a certain size and in which no newspaper meeting the legal requirements is published are permitted to send legal notice to voters via mail instead of publishing the notice in a newspaper. This bill allows any election authority the option to mail legal notice rather than publishing the notice in a newspaper. The mailing must occur within six weeks prior to the election. The election authority is permitted to exclude from the mailing any voter designated as inactive.

Currently, the filing time for declarations of candidacy for offices in political subdivisions or special districts not otherwise specified in law or charter is from the 17th Tuesday prior to the election through the 14th Tuesday prior to the election. This bill moves the filing time by one week, from the 16th Tuesday prior to the election to the 13th Tuesday prior to the election. The bill also provides that, if the 13th Tuesday prior to the election is a State or Federal holiday, the closing filing date will be the next day that is not a State or Federal holiday (Section 115.127).

Currently, in order to qualify to run public notices and advertisements, a newspaper must have been published regularly for a period of three years or it must be the successor newspaper to a defunct newspaper and begin publication no later than 30 days after the termination of the prior newspaper.

This bill reduces the time period of regular publication from three years to one year and increases the time period from 30 days to 90 days within which a successor newspaper must begin publication.

The bill also allows a newspaper that has been purchased or newly established by another newspaper that satisfies these conditions to qualify (Sections 493.050 and 493.070).

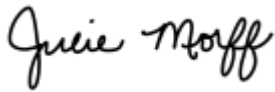
This legislation is not federally mandated, would not duplicate any other program and would not require additional capital improvements or rental space.

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
Missouri Office of Prosecution Services
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

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Missouri Lottery Commission
Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan
Missouri State Employee's Retirement System
State Tax Commission
St. Louis City Board of Elections
St. Louis County Board of Elections
Platte County Board of Elections
Kansas City Election Board



Julie Morff
Director
June 18, 2026



Jessica Harris
Assistant Director
June 18, 2026