

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
OVERSIGHT DIVISION

FISCAL NOTE

L.R. No.: 4968H.011
 Bill No.: HB 2605
 Subject: Elections; Newspapers and Publications
 Type: Original
 Date: February 27, 2026

Bill Summary: This proposal modifies provisions relating to the publication of election 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, 115.127, 116.250, and 190.050 – Publication of Election Notices

Officials from the **Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)** state 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 does not have any information to the contrary. Therefore, Oversight will reflect the estimated impact by SOS in the fiscal note. Oversight does not expect the fiscal impact to exceed the \$250,000 threshold.

Officials from the **Polk County Clerk** state the reduction to one newspaper publication will be an estimated savings in legal publications of \$2,500.00 for an April Municipal Election in Polk County. This will in turn be savings that is passed along to the entities that will be holding an election in April.

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

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.

Oversight only reflects the responses that we have received from state agencies and political subdivisions; however, other local election authorities 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</u> – SOS (§115.127) Reduced proportional costs to LEAs for newspaper election notices p.3	<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</u> – Local Election Authorities (§115.127) Reduced publication costs for newspaper election notices p.3	<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.

The bill repeals various requirements specific to notices of special elections called to fill a vacancy.

Currently, notices of election must be published in two newspapers of different political faith that meet certain legal requirements. This bill requires notices to be published in only one newspaper with no consideration of the paper's political faith.

Currently, notices of election must be published by papers that are published within the bounds of the area holding the election. This bill requires the notices to be published by papers that are circulated in the jurisdiction of the election authority.

If there is no newspaper circulated in the jurisdiction of the election authority, the notice must be published in a newspaper reasonably expected to inform the area holding the election.

Currently, the first notice of election must be published within two weeks of the election, and the second must be published within one week of 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.

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

Office of the Secretary of State
Platte County Board of Elections
St. Louis City Board of Elections
St. Louis County Board of Elections
Polk County Clerk



Julie Morff
Director
February 27, 2026



Jessica Harris
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February 27, 2026