



# Ohio Legislative Service Commission

*Terry Steele*

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## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

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**Bill:** Sub. H.B. 159 of the 129th G.A.

**Date:** June 23, 2011

**Status:** As Reported by Senate State & Local Government & Veterans Affairs

**Sponsor:** Reps. Mecklenborg and Blessing

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No

**Contents:** Requires electors to provide official photo identification when voting and provides free photo identification for this purpose

### State Fiscal Highlights

- The bill generally requires an individual who appears to vote on the day of an election or to vote an absent voter's ballot in person to provide official state identification.
- The bill also requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, or a Deputy Registrar, to provide a state identification card free of charge to those who do not possess the required photo identification. The cost of providing the free identification would be paid from the State Bureau of Motor Vehicles Fund (Fund 4W40).
- The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) estimates that there are slightly more than 500,000 individuals over the age of 18 in Ohio that currently lack photo identification and who would qualify for the free card under the bill. Accounting for just the \$1.14 per card production cost of an official state identification card or driver's license, the BMV's initial cost could be over \$570,000 to meet this requirement, with some ongoing cost in future years.
- The bill requires the BMV to establish rules allowing developmentally disabled individuals to apply for, and receive, state identification cards on-site at the 88 county boards of developmental disabilities at regular intervals. The overall fiscal impact of this provision is uncertain, but will likely exceed minimal cost levels.
- The bill adds several provisions from Sub. H.B. 194 to make the differing voter identification requirements consistent in both bills. The fiscal effect of those provisions can be found in the fiscal analysis for Sub. H.B. 194, As Reported by the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

### Local Fiscal Highlights

- No direct fiscal effect on political subdivisions.

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## Detailed Fiscal Analysis

### Photo identification

The bill requires people who wish to vote a regular ballot on the day of an election or to vote an absent voter's ballot in person to provide official photo identification when voting. Additionally, the bill requires the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, or a Deputy Registrar, to provide a state identification card free of charge to those who do not possess the required photo identification not more than once every four years. This free identification includes a nonphoto identification card for individuals that have a religious objection to being photographed. Overall, the BMV will incur some new expense for providing these state identification cards free of charge, although that cost is difficult to quantify with any precision. The operating fund that the BMV uses to pay for these expenses is the State Bureau of Motor Vehicles Fund (Fund 4W40).

The BMV's latest review of registration records indicate that there are slightly more than 8.0 million people over the age of 18 in Ohio who have some form of official state photo identification. The Bureau estimates that there are slightly more than 500,000 individuals over the age of 18 in Ohio that currently lack photo identification and that would qualify for the free card under the bill. According to the BMV, the cost the agency incurs for producing a state identification card is \$1.14 per card. If we assume that the approximately 500,000 individuals who do not currently possess official state photo identification opt to obtain a free card under the bill, the production costs to the BMV could be over \$570,000 (500,000 or more individuals x \$1.14 per card production cost) for this initial group. The BMV would also incur ongoing costs to provide the free identification to individuals who apply for cards once they turn 18 years of age.

The BMV makes up for this cost and the expense of processing applications through fees assessed to the recipient upon issuance, including a BMV processing fee of \$3.50.<sup>1</sup> The BMV would not be able to assess this fee on any of the cards it issues under the bill. However, whether the BMV fee foregone on the official identification cards issued under the bill would be considered revenue entirely foregone is a debatable point. This is because whether under current law or under the bill, some proportion of individuals will not apply for state identification under either circumstance.

### On-site photo identification

The bill requires the BMV to promulgate rules to allow developmentally disabled individuals to apply for, and receive, state identification cards on-site at the 88 county

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<sup>1</sup> Application fees include a \$3.50 fee to the BMV, and a combined fee of \$5.00 retained by the Deputy Registrar (\$3.50 processing fee and \$1.50 lamination fee).

boards of developmental disabilities at regular intervals. As neither the BMV nor these county boards are currently set up to be able to produce state identification cards at such sites, the BMV would likely incur both one-time and ongoing costs in excess of minimal. The precise magnitude of these costs is uncertain. The costs would likely be covered by money appropriated from the State Bureau of Motor Vehicles Fund (Fund 4W40).

### **House Bill 194 provisions**

The bill contains several provisions of Sub. H.B. 194, currently pending in the General Assembly, that pertain to photo identification requirements for voting. These provisions were added to this bill to provide consistency in photo identification requirements. The fiscal impact of these changes can be found in the fiscal analysis for Sub. H.B. 194, As Reported by the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee.

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