



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado’s Legislature

SB 26-058: MODIFICATIONS TO VOTER REGISTRATION

Prime Sponsors:
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Fiscal note status: This fiscal note reflects the introduced bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill modifies the automatic voter registration process, and marks any voter who has not voted in the last two General Elections as inactive.

Types of impacts. The bill is projected to affect the following areas on an ongoing basis:

- State Revenue
- State Expenditures
- Local Government

Appropriations. For FY 2026-27, the bill requires an appropriation of \$267,600 to the Department of State.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

Type of Impact	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
State Revenue	\$0	\$0
State Expenditures	\$267,600	\$50,000
Transferred Funds	\$0	\$0
Change in TABOR Refunds	\$0	\$0
Change in State FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

**Table 1A
State Expenditures**

Fund Source	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
General Fund	\$0	\$0
Cash Funds	\$267,600	\$50,000
Federal Funds	\$0	\$0
Centrally Appropriated	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$267,600	\$50,000
Total FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Summary of Legislation

Under current law, when a citizen registers for a driver’s license or identification card with the Department of Revenue, and are not registered to vote, they are processed as part of automatic voter registration. Their county clerk then sends them a mailed letter, which allows them to select a political party, be unaffiliated, or decline to register to vote. If there is no response to the letter, the voter remains registered as an unaffiliated voter. If the letter is returned undeliverable, the registration may become inactive.

The bill changes the automatic voter registration status after receiving a driver’s license or identification card to “pending”. A voter must then affirm, through the county clerk’s mailed letter, which political party they would like to register as, or if they would like to be an unaffiliated voter. If they do not respond to the message, the pending status is cancelled and the voter is not registered.

In addition, county clerks must mark any voter who has not voted in the last two General Elections as inactive.

State Revenue

Fee Impact on Businesses and Professions

Colorado law requires legislative service agency review of measures which create or increase any fee collected by a state agency. Under current law, the Department of State (DOS) is authorized to adjust fees so that the revenue generated approximates its direct and indirect costs. The DOS is primarily funded through business filing fees. To cover the costs described in the State Expenditures section below, fees will likely need to be raised to cover all or some of the costs of this bill.

This fiscal note assumes that fees may be adjusted such that the DOS will recoup its FY 2026-27 costs. The fees affected, the timing of any increase, and the actual amount of fee charges will be set administratively by the DOS based on cash fund balance and total program costs.

State Expenditures

The bill increases state expenditures in the Department of State by about \$260,000 in FY 2026-27 and about \$50,000 in FY 2027-28, and going forward. These costs, paid from the Department of State Cash Fund, are summarized in Table 2 and discussed below.

Table 2
State Expenditures
Department of State

Cost Component	Budget Year FY 2026-27	Out Year FY 2027-28
Computer Programming	\$67,600	\$0
Voter Outreach	\$200,000	\$50,000
Total Costs	\$267,600	\$50,000
Total FTE	0.0 FTE	0.0 FTE

Computer Programing

The Department of State will need to make changes to its voter registration software. Specifically, they will need to update the default status of the current automatic voter registration, and code a new pending status. They will also need to create an update status for inactive electors for failure to vote in two consecutive elections, and update existing communication notices. This is estimated to need 520 computer programming hours at \$130 an hour.

Voter Outreach

The DOS will need to conduct an outreach campaign to educate voters on the changes to the automatic voter registration, and create materials to use and distribute. This is estimated as \$200,000 for the first year to develop the materials, and an ongoing cost of \$50,000 to send out the information to eligible voters.

County Reimbursement

Under current law, the DOS reimburses counties for a portion of their costs to conduct covered elections. The bill may increase or decrease reimbursements to counties, based on the impacts described in Local Government section. The amount of this net change is indeterminate at this time, and will be adjusted through the annual budget process.

Local Government

Counties will have additional costs and savings under the bill, as outlined below. A portion of any costs incurred will be reimbursed by the state. The net impact of these costs and savings is indeterminate. Over the long term, it is likely that net savings will occur.

Voter Registration Processing

In 2025, there were 166,467 automatic voter registration forms sent out. With registration no longer automated, county clerks' offices will need additional staff time and resources to process responses in the statewide voter registration system. Based on the 2025 registrations, county clerks statewide are estimated to require about 8,000 hours of work to process voter registration, with an approximate cost of \$130,000 across all counties.

Inactive Voter Notifications

County clerks will have additional costs to mail and process inactive notices for voters who fail to vote in two consecutive elections. Based on prior voter turnout, around 800,000 voters would be marked inactive and county clerks would be required to mail a notice to them. Assuming a cost of \$0.83 per notification for printing and postage, resulting in a state wide cost of around \$660,000. It is assumed removing inactive voters would first occur following the 2026 general election in FY 2026-27, based on non-voting in the 2024 and 2026 general elections. This cost will likely decline over time due to the removal of automatic registration and the removal of currently inactive voters.

Mail Ballot Savings

The costs above will be offset by county clerks no longer being required to print and mail ballot to voters who are marked inactive or who do not complete the registration process, including both primary and general election ballots. The exact savings will depend on how inactive voters respond to the notice that they have been marked inactive, whether they are affiliated or unaffiliated, and other factors. Assuming a printing and mailing cost of \$1.50 per ballot and a reduction of 400,000 voters receiving a primary and general election ballot, savings would approach \$1.2 million per election cycle.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect 90 days following adjournment of the General Assembly sine die, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2026-27, the bill requires an appropriation of \$267,600 from the Department of State Cash Fund to the Department of State.

State and Local Government Contacts

County Clerks

State

Revenue