



Fiscal Note

Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 26-1203: MODIFICATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS

Prime Sponsors:

Rep. Marshall; Bacon
Sen. Benavidez; Liston

Fiscal Analyst:

Aaron Carpenter, 303-866-4918
aaron.carpenter@coleg.gov

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Fiscal note status: This revised fiscal note reflects the reengrossed bill.

Summary Information

Overview. The bill requires counties with a population of 70,000 or more to elect commissioners through districts.

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

- Local Government

Appropriations. No appropriation is required.

Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts

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

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires non-home rule counties with populations of 70,000 or more to elect commissioners:

- by district with only residents of each district voting in that district's election if a county has three or five commissioners; or
- by district with only residents of each district voting in that district's election for three of the commissioners and at-large for the remaining two if the county has five commissioners.

If a county wants to increase the number of commissioners from three to five, the bill requires that the commissioners designate the two alternative modes of electing by district and to refer the resolution to the registered voters at the first general election following the adoption of the resolution to determine which method voters prefer.

If a county already has five commissioners, a resolution must be adopted at its first scheduled meeting in 2027. The bill also authorizes voters to select a method through the initiative process. The bill then outlines requirements on term lengths for initial terms, petition requirements, and the number of signatures needed for a minor party candidate to get onto the ballot.

Background

Currently, there are 10 Colorado counties with a population greater than 70,000 people, not including Denver and Broomfield, which are a consolidated city and county. Of the 10 counties, Adams, Arapahoe, El Paso, and Weld counties already have five commissioners, however Adams County uses [at-large elections](#) to elect their commissioners. Weld County also has some at-large commissioner positions, but is a home rule county and meets the requirements for home rule exemption under the bill. This bill impacts the remaining 6 counties that only have three commissioners: Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Mesa, Larimer, and Pueblo, all of which elect commissioners through county-wide at-large voting but with individual commissioners representing certain districts.

Local Government

Three Commissioner Counties

Workload for Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Mesa, Larimer, and Pueblo will increase to change how commissioners are elected. The fiscal note assumes that counties will choose to make the necessary changes to election rules rather than increase the number of commissioners to five.

Adams County

In addition, costs to Adams County will increase to ask voters which method of election they prefer. It is assumed that counties already have county offices or ballot measures that will require participation in the coordinated election. If this referendum is the sole county measure on the ballot, counties will incur additional costs. If other county offices or ballot measures are on the ballot, adding one additional measure may impact the share of coordinated election costs paid by the county. For informational purposes, large urban counties in past elections have had cost of around \$700,000 to participate in coordinated elections, which would be minimally impacted by the addition of one referred measure to a typical slate of county offices and ballot measures at an even-year election.

Petition Process

The bill also creates a new countywide petition process that requires county clerks to approve petition formats, receive petitions, and review signatures to verify if the signature threshold is met for future petitions seeking to change the voting method for county commissioners.

Effective Date

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

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties

Secretary of State

County Clerks

The revenue and expenditure impacts in this fiscal note represent changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year. For additional information about fiscal notes, please visit the [General Assembly website](#).