



**Colorado  
Legislative  
Council  
Staff**

**HB16-1070**

**FINAL  
FISCAL NOTE**

**FISCAL IMPACT:**  State  Local  Statutory Public Entity  Conditional  No Fiscal Impact

**Drafting Number:** LLS 16-0357  
**Prime Sponsor(s):** Rep. Neville P.  
Sen. Neville T.

**Date:** June 2, 2016  
**Bill Status:** Signed into Law  
**Fiscal Analyst:** Chris Creighton (303-866-5834)

**BILL TOPIC:** SIGNATURE VERIFICATION IN MUNICIPAL MAIL BALLOT ELECTION

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2016-2017	FY 2017-2018
<b>State Revenue</b>		
<b>State Expenditures</b>	<b><u>\$15,450</u></b>	
Department of State Cash Fund	\$15,450	
<b>Appropriation Required:</b> \$15,450 - Department of State (FY 2016-17).		
<b>Future Year Impacts:</b> None.		

**Summary of Legislation**

This bill requires an election judge to compare the signature on each ballot return envelope with the signature of the eligible elector stored in the statewide voter registration system (SCORE) for every municipal mail ballot election. Specifications for how to compare signatures are provided in the bill. The use of a signature verification device for this purpose is authorized.

If the signatures match, the ballot is counted. If the signatures do not match, two other election judges must compare the signatures. If the election judges determine that the signatures do not match, the clerk must send the eligible voter a letter explaining the discrepancy and a form for the voter to confirm that they returned a ballot. If the form confirming that the elector returned a ballot is received within eight days after election day, the ballot must be counted. If the form is not returned or the voter indicates that they did not return a ballot, the ballot is not counted. When there is a signature discrepancy, the election judges must document the discrepancy and the signature research steps taken in a log that contains the name of the election judge, the name of the voter, the voter identification number, and the final resolution and disposition of the ballot.

This bill also requires that municipal clerks be given access to the digitized signatures in SCORE and that clerks provide training in signature comparison to election judges.

**Background**

Signature verification for mail ballots is currently only performed for municipal elections conducted as part of a coordinated election by a county clerk. For other non-coordinated elections under the Municipal Election Code, signature verification is not done for mail ballots. Upon receipt

of a mail ballot, an election judge compares the information on the envelope to election records to qualify the submitted ballot. Once qualified, the election judge indicates in the pollbook that the elector has cast a ballot and deposits the ballot in an official ballot box.

### **State Expenditures**

**This bill results in one-time cash fund costs totaling \$15,450 in the Department of State.** These costs, paid from the Department of State Cash Fund, are for computer system changes to the SCORE database that will allow municipalities to access voter signatures. This requires 150 hours of programming at a rate of \$103 per hour. This estimate is based on municipalities having access to the three most recent voter signatures stored in SCORE and municipal staff using their existing log-ins for access.

### **Local Government Impact**

Impacts to local governments are expected to be minimal and only for municipalities conducting non-coordinated elections. Specifically, these municipalities will have increased workload to train election judges to verify signatures. However given that training is regularly provided for election judges and verification of voter information already is conducted for mail ballots, the workload impact of these new duties is expected to be minimal.

Municipalities are authorized to use a signature verification device under this bill. Municipalities choosing to purchase a device will have additional election costs. Municipal election costs may increase slightly to mail required forms to voters whose signature do not match.

### **Effective Date**

This bill was signed into law by the Governor on April 22, 2016, and takes effect on August 10, 2016, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

### **State Appropriations**

Consistent with this fiscal note, for FY2016-17, this bill appropriates \$15,450 to the Department of State Cash Fund.

### **State and Local Government Contacts**

Counties  
Information Technology

Municipalities  
Secretary of State

County Clerks