



Legislative
Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

HB 20-1081

**REVISED
FISCAL NOTE**

(replaces fiscal note dated January 27, 2020)

Drafting Number: LLS 20-0035
Prime Sponsors: Rep. Caraveo
Sen. Gonzales

Date: February 18, 2020
Bill Status: House Appropriations
Fiscal Analyst: Jeff Stupak | 303-866-5834
Jeff.Stupak@state.co.us

Bill Topic: **MULTILINGUAL BALLOT ACCESS**

**Summary of
Fiscal Impact:**

- State Revenue
- State Expenditure
- State Transfer
- TABOR Refund
- Local Government
- Statutory Public Entity

This bill increases access to multilingual ballots for voters and requires additional translation services to be offered by the Department of State. The bill increases state and local expenditures on an ongoing basis.

**Appropriation
Summary:**

For FY 2020-21, the bill requires an appropriation of \$72,112 to the Department of State.

**Fiscal Note
Status:**

This fiscal note reflects the introduced bill as amended by the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under HB 20-1081**

| | | FY 2020-21 | FY 2021-22 | FY 2022-23 |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Revenue | | - | - | - |
| Expenditures | Cash Funds | \$72,112 | \$432 | \$12,182 |
| Transfers | | - | - | |
| TABOR Refund | | - | - | |

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires the Department of State (department) to establish a multilingual ballot hotline to provide access to qualified translators in each of the languages offered in the most recent decennial census, to assist electors in translating ballot language. The service must be established for the general election held in November 2022, and for every general and statewide odd-year election that follows.

For the general election held in November 2020, and for every general and statewide odd-year election that follows, the bill requires the department and county clerks to coordinate in offering a minority language sample ballot and an in-person ballot (when requested) for counties where:

- at least 2,000 citizens, ages 18 and up, speak English less than very well, as defined by the American Community Survey, and speak a shared minority language at home; or
- at least 2.5 percent of citizens, ages 18 and up, speak English less than very well, and speak a shared minority language at home.

Assumptions

This note assumes that for the general election in 2020 the department will have to provide a minority language ballot to 22 counties in Spanish and/or Vietnamese. The department currently translates the state-wide ballot into Spanish, and it is assumed that it will cost \$432 to translate the statewide ballot into Vietnamese. This cost is based on informal quotes from several third-party vendors. The department is assumed to only provide translation services for the state-wide ballot.

For the general election in 2022 this fiscal note assumes that the department will contract with a third-party to provide qualified translators for the multilingual ballot hotline and will offer the 12 spoken languages offered on the 2020 census. It is assumed that the qualified translators will cost \$2.35 per minute, with an average call length of 20 minutes. Approximately 250 voters are expected to utilize this service each year. These assumptions are based on pricing provided by third-parties and on the experience of the City and County of Denver, which utilized a similar service during the 2018 general election.

State Expenditures

The bill increases cash fund expenditures in the Department of State by \$72,112 in FY 2020-21, by \$432 in FY 2021-22, and by \$12,182 in FY 2022-23 and future years.

The Department of State will incur a one-time programming cost of \$71,680 in FY 2020-21 to make system changes to the Ballot Access application to include new languages and additional content. Programming costs assume 640 hours at a rate of \$112 per hour. The Department of State will also incur ongoing costs to translate statewide ballot content into Vietnamese (\$432) beginning in FY 2020-21, and costs to provide qualified translators for the multilingual ballot hotline (\$11,750) beginning in FY 2022-23.

Table 2
Expenditures Under HB 20-1081

| | FY 2020-21 | FY 2021-22 | FY 2022-23 |
|---|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Department of State | | | |
| Programming - Ballot Access application | \$71,680 | - | - |
| Ballot Translation Services | \$432 | \$432 | \$432 |
| Hotline Translation Services | - | - | \$11,750 |
| Total Cost | \$72,112 | \$432 | \$12,182 |

Local Government

The bill requires county clerks to provide translations of all county and local level ballot content if a minority language ballot is required in their county. The total cost for counties will depend on the number of minority languages each county is required to accommodate, the amount of ballot content that must be translated, the number of different ballot layouts, and management costs to administer the new multilingual ballots. The annual cost to county clerks could range from roughly \$45,000 for a small county, \$60,000 for a medium county, and over \$350,000 for a large county.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State Appropriations

For FY 2020-21, this bill requires an appropriation of \$72,112 from the Department of State Cash Fund to the Department of State.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Local Affairs
Secretary of State

County Clerks
Municipalities

Law
Personnel