



Legislative Council Staff

Nonpartisan Services for Colorado's Legislature

Final Fiscal Note

Drafting Number:	LLS 21-0054	Date:	July 21, 2021
Prime Sponsors:	Rep. Caraveo Sen. Gonzales; Moreno	Bill Status:	Signed into Law
		Fiscal Analyst	Sonia Hatfield 303-866-4785 Sonia.Hatfield@state.co.us

Bill Topic: **MULTILINGUAL BALLOT ACCESS FOR VOTERS**

Summary of Fiscal Impact:	<input type="checkbox"/> State Revenue	<input type="checkbox"/> TABOR Refund
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State Expenditure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Government
	<input type="checkbox"/> State Transfer	<input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Public Entity

This bill increases access to multilingual ballots for voters and requires additional translation services to be offered by the Secretary of State and county clerks. Beginning in FY 2021-22, the bill increases state and local expenditures on an ongoing basis.

Appropriation Summary: For FY 2021-22, this bill requires and includes an appropriation of \$82,800 to the Secretary of State.

Fiscal Note Status: This fiscal note reflects the enacted bill.

**Table 1
State Fiscal Impacts Under HB 21-1011**

		Budget Year FY 2021-22	Out Year FY 2022-23
Revenue		-	-
Expenditures	Cash Funds	\$82,800	\$13,750
Transfers		-	-
TABOR Refund		-	-

Summary of Legislation

This bill requires the Secretary of State (SOS) and county clerks and recorders to provide multilingual ballot access in counties where either 2,000 citizens or 2.5 percent of citizens ages 18 and up speak English less than very well, and speak a shared minority language at home.

The bill requires the SOS to establish a multilingual ballot hotline to provide access to qualified translators or interpreters in each of the languages that meet the above criteria and any additional languages the secretary determines are needed to assist electors in understanding ballot language. The hotline must be established for the general election held in November 2022, and for every general election and statewide odd-year election thereafter.

The bill requires the county clerk of affected counties to coordinate with the SOS to create minority language sample ballots in required languages. Sample ballots must include the same content as the English language ballot. The county clerk is required to make the minority language ballot available to voters online. Sample ballots must also be available in person at voter service and polling centers county-wide. In addition, Legislative Council Staff must provide translations of statewide ballot questions in the required languages, which will be made available for county clerks to include on sample ballots.

State Expenditures

This bill increases cash fund expenditures in the Secretary of State by \$82,800 in FY 2021-22, and by \$13,750 in FY 2022-23 and future years. The bill will also minimally increase workload for the Legislative Council Staff (LCS). New state costs are displayed in Table 2 and described below.

Table 2
Expenditures Under HB 21-1011

	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23
Department of State		
Computer Programming Services	\$82,800	-
Hotline Translation Services	-	\$11,750
Hotline Audio Prompts Services	-	\$2,000
Total Cost	\$82,800	\$13,750

Secretary of State. The SOS will incur a one-time programming cost to make system changes to the Ballot Access application to allow new languages and additional content. Programming services are assumed to require 720 hours at \$115/hour. Beginning in FY 2022-23, the SOS will also have ongoing costs to translate statewide ballot content for 22 counties into Spanish and/or Vietnamese and to provide qualified interpreters in at least five spoken languages for the multilingual ballot hotline. It is assumed that the qualified interpreters will cost \$2.35 per minute, with an average call length of 20 minutes. Audio prompts for the hotline will need to be translated and recorded at a cost of \$2,000. Approximately 250 voters are expected to utilize this service every 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 2020 general election.

Legislative Council Staff. The bill requires that LCS provide translations of all statewide ballot questions or issues to the Secretary of State in every language that meets the requirements for a minority language sample ballot. This expenditure is expected to be minimal and no additional appropriation is required.

Local Government

This bill requires county clerks to provide translations to 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. Based on estimates provided by county clerks, the annual cost could range from roughly \$45,900 for a small county, \$61,200 for a medium county, and over \$357,000 for a large county. However, subject to available resources the state may provide financial assistance to counties to meet the provisions in this bill, therefore exact local costs are indeterminate.

Effective Date

This bill was signed into law by the Governor on June 28, 2021, and takes effect September 7, 2021, assuming no referendum petition is filed.

State Appropriations

For FY 2021-22, this bill requires and includes an appropriation of \$82,800 from the Department of State Cash Fund to the Department of State.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties	County Clerks	Information Technology
Law	Personnel	Regulatory Agencies
Secretary of State		