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The 2023 Colorado General Assembly considered a range of election bills related to the funding and administration of elections, recalls and vacancies, and voting systems.

Funding and Administration

This session, Colorado changed the way statewide elections are financed and required more funding to be routed to counties. *Senate Bill 23-276* requires the Department of State to pay 45 percent of the cost that a county incurs in conducting any election with state-certified ballot content. This replaces the existing per-voter funding model, and it is estimated to add \$12.5 million dollars in county reimbursements in the first two years.

The bill also made a number of administrative changes to election law, including:

- placing limitations on certain campaign contributions;
- allowing for digital voter identification;
- changing the requirements for voter service and polling centers and drop boxes, including required numbers and locations;

- adjusting requirements for the number and conduct of election judges and watchers; and
- creating a new misdemeanor offense for candidates who willfully file a false or incomplete campaign finance affidavit or disclosure statement.

Campaign Practices. *House Bill 23-1245* sets municipal election campaign contribution limits at \$400 for individuals and political parties, and \$4,000 for small donor committees to a candidate committee. The bill also changes municipal clerks' report filing timelines and subjects them to open record requests, extends filing retention requirements, and applies additional disclosure requirements.

County Governance. Several bills that did not pass also would have made administrative changes in county governance. *House Bill 23-1180* would have changed the election processes and the required number of county commissioners for large counties. *House Bill 23-1149* would have allowed county clerks of small counties to reduce the required number of voter services and polling centers, and would have permitted clerks to appoint staff members as election judges. In addition, *House Bill 23-1206*, as amended, would have limited the political activities of employees of county sheriffs' offices. All of these bills were postponed indefinitely in committee.



Recalls and Vacancies

House Bill 23-1185 makes a number of changes and clarifications to the requirements for recall elections and filling municipal government vacancies. The bill standardizes the process to replace city council members, mayors, and public trustees when a vacancy occurs or an official is removed or recalled from office. It also requires city clerks to call special elections to fill municipal vacancies if the city council lacks a quorum to appoint a replacement.

Voting Systems

Several bills would have changed how voting systems operated in the state. *House Bill 23-1055* would have prohibited the use of voting systems that are capable of establishing wireless connections. *House Bill 23-1170* would have required the use of distributed ledger technology in elections and established voter eligibility verification systems for in-person and mail-in voting. Finally, *Senate Bill 23-301* would have established a ranked-choice voting system for presidential primary elections. None of the bills passed out of committee.

