



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1658

LR 1526(02)

An Act To Increase Campaign Finance Transparency and Accountability in Municipal Elections

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "

Committee: State and Local Government

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Potential State Mandate - Unfunded

	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Projections FY 2023-24	Projections FY 2024-25
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$21,913	\$49,007
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$21,913	\$49,007

State Mandates

Required Activity

A town or city with a population of less than 30,000 is required to post each campaign finance report received on the municipality's publicly accessible website within 2 business days after the applicable deadline for filing campaign finance reports. Although municipalities are required to receive these reports under current law, many will incur additional costs to modify existing websites or create new websites to post the required information.

Unit Affected
Municipality

Local Cost
Moderate
statewide

The required local activities in this bill may represent a state mandate pursuant to the Constitution of Maine. If the bill does require a local unit of government to expand or modify its activities so as to necessitate additional expenditures from local revenue, the state mandate provisions of the Constitution of Maine require either: (1) General Fund appropriations be provided to fund at least 90% of any additional necessitated local costs of the mandate; or (2) a Mandate Preamble be added to the bill and two-thirds of the members of each House vote to exempt the mandate from the funding requirement. If the bill does represent a state mandate and neither one of these actions occurs, the local units of government will not be required to implement the mandated activities.

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill requires candidates or political action committees seeking to influence the election of a candidate for a municipal office of a town or city with a population of 30,000 or more to submit registrations and campaign finance reports to the Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices. Currently they are required to file reports with the municipal clerk in municipalities with populations of 15,000 or more. The commission has estimated an appropriation of \$1,000,000 is needed for software upgrades to the campaign finance filing and reporting system to accommodate the additional reporting requirements and the bill includes a one-time General Fund appropriation of that amount in fiscal year 2022-23.

The bill also requires the commission to provide additional training for municipal clerks on campaign finance and compliance laws and regulations and to hire additional temporary staff during biennial election years. The commission has indicated that it will require appropriations of \$21,913 in fiscal year 2023-24 and \$49,007 in fiscal year 2024-25 for one limited-period Planning and Research Assistant position beginning January 1, 2024.