

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE TO  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR  
ASSEMBLY, No. 180

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: April 1, 1996

Assembly Committee Substitute for Assembly Bill No. 180 of 1996 provides for the designation and consolidation of polling places and voting equipment for the purposes of conducting annual school board elections when no more than 500 ballots have been cast during the two preceding annual school elections. The consolidation shall occur upon the request of a board of education or the clerk of a municipality in a county or upon a county's own initiative. Under the bill, if one polling place is designated for two or more election districts, the county board shall designate at least two members from among the members of the district boards of election of those election districts to perform all the duties of the district board for the school election. Of the two members so designated, one shall serve as judge and another shall serve as the inspector for school elections. The bill provides that any additional costs incurred by counties and municipalities shall be exempt from the limitation of their budget caps and that any additional costs to school boards shall be outside of their budget cap for regular educational program expenditures. The bill also requires the Secretary of State, after the first annual school election conducted pursuant to P.L.1995, c. 278 (C. 19:60-1 et seq.), which will be held in April of 1996, to conduct a survey of each school district to compare the costs of conducting the school election pursuant to that law with the costs of conducting school elections previously under Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. The secretary is to report the findings of the survey to the Governor and the Legislature no later than October 1, 1996. The jurisdiction for conducting school board elections was transferred from the local boards of education (Title 18A) to county boards of election (Title 19) upon the enactment of P.L. 1995, c. 278.

The Office of Legislative (OLS) is unable to estimate the savings to boards of education which might result from the enactment of this bill. Due to the passage of P.L. 1995, c. 278, which transferred the jurisdiction for conducting school board elections from local boards of education to county boards of election, the cost of conducting school elections is expected to increase significantly under the provisions of Title 19. This bill, by allowing the consolidation of polling places, would partially offset the additional costs under the new law. Since no elections have been held under the new elections system, it is not possible to estimate any savings which might result from using fewer

polling places, workers, etc. The first annual election under the new system will be held April 16, 1996. In addition, information concerning election expenditures at the local level is not readily available. Furthermore, any savings realized as a result of this bill are based on the actual requests of school boards, municipal clerks or counties and it is not known how many of the above will make such a request.

OLS estimates that there will be no additional cost to the State as a result of the cost survey mandated by the bill. A representative of the Office of the Secretary of State has indicated that the one time costs associated with the survey required of it will be paid for from existing funds.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67.