

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Ethics and Elections

BILL: SB 1202

INTRODUCER: Senator Brandes

SUBJECT: Voter Registration

DATE: March 6, 2015

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carlton	Roberts	EE	Favorable
2.			ED	
3.			RC	

I. Summary:

SB 1202 designates the first week in May of each year as “Florida High School Senior Voter Registration Week.” The bill provides that each Supervisor of Elections (“Supervisor”) may, in collaboration with the local school district, provide high school seniors with the opportunity to register to vote and provide instruction on the elections process, voter registration requirements, polling place processes, and the history of suffrage in the United States.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2015.

II. Present Situation:

The Department of State (“Department”) is required by s. 98.255, F.S., to adopt rules prescribing minimum standards for voter education. The standards shall, at a minimum, address: voter registration; balloting procedures, absentee and polling place; voter rights and responsibilities; distribution of sample ballots; and public service announcements. Each Supervisor of Elections is required to implement the minimum voter education standards, and shall conduct additional nonpartisan education efforts as necessary to ensure that voters have a working knowledge of the voting process. The Supervisors are required to provide a detailed description of their voter education programs to the Department of State.

Pursuant to s. 98.255, F.S., the Department adopted Rule 1S-2.033(3)(a), F.A.C., which requires a county supervisor of elections to conduct at least once a year a high school voter registration/education program in each public high school in the county. The program must be developed in cooperation with the local school board and be designed for maximum effectiveness in reaching and educating high school students who are eligible to pre-register or register.

Currently, s. 97.0583, F.S., requires qualifying educational institutions to provide each student enrolled in that institution the opportunity to register to vote or to update a voter registration record on each campus at least once a year. Qualifying educational institutions are also encouraged to provide voter registration services at other times and places, such as upon application for financial aid, during admissions, at registration, upon issuance of student identifications, and at new-student orientation. For purposes of this law, a qualifying educational institution is:

any public or private educational institution receiving state financial assistance which has, as its primary mission, the provision of education or training to students who are at least 18 years of age, provided such institution has more than 200 students enrolled in classes with the institution and provided that the recognized student government organization has requested this designation in writing and has filed the request with the office of the supervisor of elections in the county in which the institution is located. See, s. 97.021(32), F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates s. 98.255, F.S., which designates the first week in May of each year as “Florida High School Senior Voter Registration Week.” The bill also provides that each Supervisor may, in collaboration with the local school district, provide high school seniors with the opportunity to register to vote and provide instruction on the elections process, voter registration requirements, polling place processes, and the history of suffrage in the United States.

The bill provides for an effective date of July 1, 2015.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates section 98.255 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.