

## **FISCAL NOTE**

### **SB 12 – HB 17**

January 29, 2007

**SUMMARY OF BILL:** Eliminates physical absence as a requirement for absentee voting.

#### **ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:**

**Increase Local Govt. Expenditures\* - \$965,000 Recurring  
\$305,000 One-Time**

Assumptions:

- This bill would result in expanded absentee voting. Over the last two election cycles an average of two percent of all votes were cast by absentee ballot. According to the Division of Elections, the number of absentee votes could increase over time to 15 percent to 25 percent of all votes cast. The cost to local governments would depend upon the size of the county and the number of registered voters voting absentee who would not have voted absentee otherwise, or who would not have voted at all.
- According to the 2000 federal census, there are four large counties (population in excess of 200,000), 41 medium-sized counties (population between 30,000 and 200,000) and 50 small counties (population less than 30,000) in Tennessee.
- The average annualized recurring cost to expand absentee voting in a large county is estimated to be approximately \$50,000 ( $\$50,000 \times 4 = \$200,000$ ); \$15,000 in a medium-sized county ( $\$15,000 \times 41 = \$615,000$ ); and \$3,000 in a small county ( $\$3,000 \times 50 = \$150,000$ ). These costs are for additional temporary staff, benefits, printing, postage, and miscellaneous office supplies.
- The average one-time cost to a large county is estimated to be approximately \$15,000 ( $\$15,000 \times 4 = \$60,000$ ); \$5,000 in a medium-sized county ( $\$5,000 \times 41 = \$205,000$ ); and \$800 in a small county ( $\$800 \times 50 = \$40,000$ ). These costs are for additional scanners, computers and miscellaneous office supplies.
- The increase in local government expenditures is an annualized cost. The total increase in recurring expenditures over a two-year election cycle is \$1,930,000.

- Over time there could be a reduction in the number of staff and voting machines required during regular elections if greater numbers of voters elect to vote absentee. Such a reduction cannot be quantified.

\*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: *no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

**CERTIFICATION:**

This is to duly certify that the information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James W. White". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "W".

James W. White, Executive Director