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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 02/21/11

SPONSOR Dodge LAST UPDATED _____ HB 455

SHORT TITLE Splitting of Certain Voting Precincts SB _____

ANALYST Aledo

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY11	FY12		
	\$4,000.0	Nonrecurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Secretary of State (SOS)

Association of County Clerks (ACC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 455 increases the requirement for number of votes cast in a precinct before that precinct must be divided into at least two precincts. It changes the current language from 800 votes cast in person to 1,000 votes cast in any manner in a precinct.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

According to the Secretary of State's office, this bill will greatly increase the cost of elections. The SOS estimates that New Mexico's counties will have to create 395 new precincts if this bill passes in its current form. The cost to the counties for staffing 395 new precincts would be approximately \$246,650 for each election. Additionally, there would be costs unknown at this time for mailing out new voter information cards and voter education efforts. Counties would also be faced with the burden of finding public buildings in which to locate these new precincts, a particular difficulty in rural counties. The SOS states that the State of New Mexico would incur a cost for supplying voting equipment to each of these polling places in the amount of \$3,950,000.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to the SOS and the ACC, the deletion of the phrase “in person” is a significant change. In the Class A counties, with multiple early voting sites, as many as 30 percent or more of voters in a precinct may vote early, rather than at their Election Day polling place. Another percentage may vote absentee. It is not uncommon in the Class A Counties to have 40 percent or more voters vote other than at their Election Day polling place.

AMENDMENTS

A suggested amendment would be to reinsert the phrase “in person” to avoid the aforementioned costs.

MCA/bym:svb