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## FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 135

**SHORT TITLE:** Election Nominating Petition Changes

**SPONSOR:** McQueen

**LAST ORIGINAL**  
**UPDATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** 2/11/2026 **ANALYST:** Esquibel

### ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT\* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
SOS	Choose an item.	\$50.5	\$50.5	\$101.0	Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses ( ) indicate expenditure decreases.

\*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

### Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis

Attorney General's Office

Secretary of State's Office

## SUMMARY

### Synopsis of House Bill 135

House Bill 135 (HB135) would amend the Election Code to allow voters to sign more than one nominating petition for the same office, to reduce the number of signatures required on petitions for independent candidates, and to allow unaffiliated voters to sign nominating petitions in a primary election.

The effective date of this bill is July 1, 2026.

## FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Secretary of State (SOS) reports the provisions of the bill would require modifications to the online petition gathering IT platform and the voter registration and election management IT system with an estimated cost of \$28 thousand and \$22.5 thousand, respectively.

## SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Attorney General's office reports the bill proposes to amend the Election Code to allow voters to sign nominating petitions for multiple candidates. Currently, voters may sign one

nominating petition per candidate per position. The bill does not affect the number of signatures prospective candidates must secure but instead expands the pool of eligible signers for any given prospective candidate.

## **TECHNICAL ISSUES**

The Secretary of State notes an effective date of September 1, 2027, would better align with existing statutory requirements.

SOS notes the following language in the bill is duplicated in current statute, “If a person signing has signed one petition more than once, only one signature from that person shall count toward the total number of signatures required for that candidate for office.”

## **OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

SOS reports the National Conference of State Legislatures indicates all states except Alaska utilize a nominating petition process for at least some candidates seeking placement on election ballots. Independent candidates are required to file for the general election a nominating petition containing the signatures of registered voters of the state or district who may or may not be affiliated with a political party in New Mexico.

SOS notes equity in candidate ballot access in an important facet of the democratic process, and, as with all changes that impact that process, the SOS believes it is essential to evaluate nominating petition signature thresholds in the full context of the electoral process.

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