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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

H.B. 487  
134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 487's Bill Analysis](#)

**Version:** As Reported by Senate Local Government and Elections

**Primary Sponsor:** Rep. Young.

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** No

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### Highlights

- The bill revises the bidding process for contracts for ballot printing and eliminates the requirement that such contracts be awarded only to in-state vendors. This could potentially reduce ballot printing costs for certain county boards of elections. During the CY 2020 election cycle, the statewide average per ballot printing costs ranged from 30¢ to 40¢ per ballot.

### Detailed Analysis

Overall, the bill may potentially reduce ballot printing costs for some county boards of elections, but the total magnitude of ballot printing cost reductions is uncertain. The bill makes two primary changes to the bidding process for ballot printing contracts. First, the bill modifies the bidding procedures for election ballots in amounts of over \$25,000 by requiring a vendor to post a performance bond equal to 100% of the estimated ballot printing costs. It is uncertain as to whether or not the required performance bonds would impact the number of vendors bidding on a printing contract.

The more significant potential fiscal impact under the bill, however, is from eliminating the current law requirement that all ballot printing contracts be awarded to vendors within the state. It is possible that allowing out-of-state vendors to bid on these contracts could result in lower printing costs. However, it is unclear how much of an impact this change may have on ballot printing costs overall. As an example, during the CY 2020 election cycle, the cumulative ballot printing costs for all county boards of elections across the state was just over \$5.4 million. The printing price per ballot typically varies between primary and general elections, primarily due to the number of printed ballots that are needed. Several additional factors have a bearing on ballot printing costs. First, the total number of printed ballots needed generally impacts the printing cost per ballot. Secondly, whether the ballots are printed as absent voter ballots or

election day ballots also impacts the rate. Finally, the ballot printing costs are impacted by the length of the ballot. Those elections where there are multiple ballot initiatives or ballot questions will result in higher printing costs. Of all these, the ballot length typically has the greatest impact on cost. The table below summarizes the range of ballot printing costs by ballot type as well as primary or general election for the 2020 election cycle.

<b>Ballot Printing Costs – 2020 Election Cycle – Cost per Ballot</b>			
<b>Ballot Type</b>	<b>Lowest Rate</b>	<b>Highest Rate</b>	<b>Statewide Average Rate</b>
Primary Election – Absent Voter Ballot	10¢	\$2.10	40¢
Primary Election – Election Day Ballot	12¢	52¢	30¢
General Election – Absent Voter Ballot	10¢	\$2.10	39¢
General Election – Election Day Ballot	12¢	52¢	30¢

Data reported to Secretary of State by individual county boards of elections.

As the table above shows, the average per ballot printing cost ranged from as low as 10¢ per ballot to as high as \$2.10 per ballot. Overall statewide, ballot printing costs ranged from between 30¢ to 40¢ per ballot. While it is possible the ballot printing changes in the bill may reduce some of these printing costs, the extent of those potential cost reductions is not clear.