


Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note
FINAL
FISCAL NOTE

Drafting Number: LLS 12-0014
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Szabo
 Sen. Spence

Date: June 11, 2012
Bill Status: Postponed Indefinitely
Fiscal Analyst: Bill Zepernick (303-866-4777)

TITLE: CONCERNING A REQUIREMENT THAT THE BALLOT TITLE OF A STATEWIDE MEASURE BE WRITTEN IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.

Fiscal Impact Summary	FY 2012-2013	FY 2013-2014
State Revenue		
State Expenditures	See State Expenditures section.	
FTE Position Change		
Effective Date: The bill was postponed indefinitely by the Senate State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee on February 29, 2012.		
Appropriation Summary for FY 2012-2013: None required.		
Local Government Impact: Potential costs. See Local Government Impact section.		

Summary of Legislation

The bill requires that ballot titles be written, to the extent possible, in plain, nontechnical language that is understandable to the average reader. The plain language requirement applies to citizen-initiated measures that have their titles set by the Title Board and to measures referred to the ballot by the General Assembly. Ballot titles for measures referred by the General Assembly are presumed to conform with the plain language requirement.

State Expenditures

Any costs under the bill will be minimal and absorbed within existing resources. The Office of Legislative Legal Services will incorporate the bill's plain language requirement into practices before the Title Board and in the drafting of referred measures. The Supreme Court may hear cases alleging a violation of the plain language standard; however, such cases are expected to be infrequent and represent a minimal increase in the workload of the Supreme Court.

Local Government Impact

The plain language requirement could affect the length of ballots in some or all Colorado counties, especially in election years with a substantial number of ballot measures. However, the exact impact of the plain language requirement in comparison to current law cannot be estimated, as using plain language in ballot titles could either cause the ballot length to increase or decrease, depending on the subject matter of the measure. Increased ballot length can increase costs for printing and postage for county clerks, especially in the event that an additional page is required on ballot forms. Any impact to county clerks is assumed to be minimal.

Departments Contacted

Judicial
Personnel and Administration
State

Legislative Council Staff
Law
Office of Legislative Legal Services