

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

BILL: SB 1834

SPONSOR: Senator Meek

SUBJECT: Elections; Voter Signatures

DATE: March 25, 1999

REVISED: 4/15/99 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>EE</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>FP</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 1834 provides for the periodic updating of the signatures of voters who are 55 years of age or older. The bill requires the supervisors of elections to send a notice to each of these voters beginning in the year 2000 and every four years thereafter for the purpose of updating the voter's signature. Hispanic voters are required to receive the notice in both English and Spanish. The failure of a voter to return the notice with a signature update will not affect the voter's registration or subject the voter to any other penalty.

This bill creates section 101.675 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

When a person registers to vote, the voter's registration application is stored in the office of the supervisor of elections either as a paper record, on microfilm, or as a digital image. If a voter updates any of the registration information (e.g., address, name, party affiliation), the voter must sign that update. Many of the supervisors of elections update the signature when any registration change is made by the voter, although there is no statutory requirement for them to do so.

A person's signature changes for various reasons. Often when a voter attends college or enters military service his or her signature will change. In addition, illness of a voter or age will cause the signature of a voter to change.

The only mandatory requirement for the supervisor to contact the voter for the purpose of obtaining a signature update is when a voter's absentee ballot is rejected by the canvassing board because of a difference between the signature on the ballot and the signature on the voter's registration. [s. 101.68(4), F.S]

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 1834 requires the signature of every registered voter who is 55 years of age or older to be updated every four years. In order to accomplish the signature update, the supervisor of elections of each county is required to send to every registered voter of the county who is 55 years of age or older a notice for the voter to sign and return. If there is an indication on the voter's registration application that he or she is Hispanic, the notice must be provided in both English and Spanish. Failure of the voter to update his or her signature will not affect the voter's registration or subject the voter to any penalty.

The bill requires the notice to be sent by nonforwardable, return-if-undeliverable mail. Therefore, in addition to being used for a signature update, the notice will facilitate registration list maintenance activities of the supervisors of elections. If the notice is returned as non-deliverable, the supervisor of elections will proceed with an address confirmation request or an address confirmation final notice.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

This bill is exempt from the mandates provision of Article VII, section 18, Florida Constitution.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

There are currently 3,308,918 registered voters in Florida who are 55 years of age or older. Based on the current postage of \$.33 per piece, the mailing costs of this bill will be \$1,091,942. The supervisors of elections will incur the printing and mailing costs as a result

of this bill. The costs will vary by county, depending on the number of voters in the county who are 55 years of age or older.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

#1 by Ethics and Elections:

The strike everything amendment requires the supervisors of elections to send, every four years, a notice to each voter who is 65 years of age or older for the voter to use to update his or her signature, rather than the 55 years of age requirement in the original bill. In addition, the amendment provides that a notice need not be sent to any voter who has updated his or her signature during the preceding four years.