

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

BILL: SB 2360
 SPONSOR: Senator Sebesta
 SUBJECT: Voter Education
 DATE: March 8, 2002 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	White	O'Farrell	ED	Favorable
2.	_____	_____	EE	_____
3.	_____	_____	AED	_____
4.	_____	_____	AP	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 2360 requires district school boards and county supervisors of elections to conduct voter education to high school students in grade 12.

This bill creates an undesignated section of the Florida Statutes.

The effective date is July 1, 2002.

II. Present Situation:

Over 8 million people are registered to vote in Florida. Nationwide and in Florida, people aged 18-24 have the lowest rate of registering and voting than any other group. Only 45.4 percent of them are registered, and, of those, only 32.3 percent voted in the election held in November 2000:

Age group	Registered	Voted in 2000
18-24	45.4 percent	32.3 percent
25-44	59.6 percent	49.8 percent
45-64	71.2 percent	64.1 percent

Source: U.S. Census.

Since the passage of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, called the *Motor Voter* law because it allows people to register to vote at the same time they apply for a driver's license, registration numbers have increased. The perception that many citizens might register to vote "as an afterthought" raises the question of whether voter education might increase the number of registered voters who become informed about elections issues and act on their right to vote.

A person must be 18 to register to vote in Florida, but preregistration is allowed at age 17. The advantage of preregistration is that it eliminates the required 29-day delay before a newly-registered voter may actually cast a vote. Preregistered 17-year olds receive their voter registration cards on their 18th birthday and may vote in an election on that same day.

Most high schools conduct voter education as part of required courses in social studies or life management skills, but it is not uniformly or consistently conducted in cooperation with the county supervisor of elections.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The legislation under consideration will require school boards and county supervisors of elections to cooperate to provide voter education to all high school seniors. The bill encourages but does not require this education to be conducted during school hours and to provide an opportunity for students to preregister to vote if they complete the class.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

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:

A nominal expense could be incurred if school districts provided the opportunity for students in the voter education assembly to preregister.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
