

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT ESTIMATING CONFERENCE**

### ***SUMMARY OF INITIATIVE FINANCIAL INFORMATION STATEMENT VOTING RESTORATION AMENDMENT (14-01)***

Under the current voter registration process, a felon who registers to vote must affirm that his or her voting rights have been restored. The Department of State must identify when this is not the case and work with the supervisor of elections to remove the felon's name from the statewide voter registration system. This process is primarily outlined in Chapter 98 of the Florida Statutes. The Conference believes existing law accommodates implementation of the amendment.

Assuming the amendment is implemented under current law, the Conference determined that, at a minimum, this results in:

1. Additional costs to the Department of State due to a higher volume of felons registering to vote, and greater administrative responsibilities. These costs will be even higher if research on financial obligations is required.
2. Reduced costs to the Board of Executive Clemency and the Florida Commission on Offender Review as some felons who would have previously sought to restore their civil rights are diverted to the new process for voter registration and do not pursue restoration of their remaining civil rights.
3. Increased costs to the Department of Corrections due to the high volume of felons registering to vote who would not have sought restoration of their civil rights.
4. Increased costs to the clerks of the circuit court due to the high volume of felons registering to vote who would not have sought restoration of their civil rights. There will also be decreased record production costs for the clerks of the circuit court as some persons who would have previously applied for the restoration of civil rights are diverted to the new process for voter registration and do not pursue restoration of their remaining civil rights. The increased costs will likely outweigh the savings.

Taking all of the increased and reduced costs into consideration, it is probable that the amendment will result in increased costs to state and local governments due to the higher volume of felons registering to vote; however, the specific dollar amount cannot be determined. The Conference notes that the increased costs will be higher in the earlier years of implementation due to the amendment's retroactive application.

Alternatively, the Legislature may decide to change the current process. What direction the Legislature would take in lieu of the current-law scenario is uncertain. Given the many possible avenues that additional legislation could take, the fiscal impact of any future action by the Legislature is unknown in regard to direction (increased or reduced costs) or magnitude (amount of savings or costs relative to the existing clemency process).

Currently, a felon seeking restoration of civil rights does not pay a fee, and the amendment will not change this.

It is unclear whether the phrase "terms of sentence" includes payment of court-ordered restitution, fines, and court costs. If these payments are not included, there will be a potential loss of revenues. However, if these payments are included, it will result in additional revenues to state and local governments. The revenue impact, if any, cannot be determined.