

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 2194
 SPONSOR: Senators Dyer, Dawson, and others
 SUBJECT: Voter Education
 DATE: April 6, 2001

REVISED: 04/19/01 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Fox</u>	<u>Bradshaw</u>	<u>EE</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>ED</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AGG</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

Senate Bill 2194 requires county supervisors of elections to implement voter education programs by the 2002 general election. The bill envisions that the programs will, in effect, serve as pilot projects for future statutory codification of the best ideas for use statewide.

The bill allocates an unspecified sum to the Division of Elections to make grants to supervisors to fund the voter education efforts.

In addition, the bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to expand the quality of civic education programs in high schools.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001.

This bill creates unnumbered sections of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Section 101.031, F.S., requires the Department of State to print instructions to voters and to provide them to counties upon request. Supervisors of elections are required to post two of these instruction cards at each precinct. These notices provide basic instructions to voters. In addition, section 98.255, Florida Statutes, authorizes the supervisor of elections to provide voter education programs and materials as he or she deems appropriate.

With regard to civic education, public schools are required to teach:

- The contents of the Declaration of Independence and how it forms the philosophical foundation of our government;
- The arguments in support of adopting our republican form of government, as they are embodied in the most important of the Federalist Papers;
- The essentials of the United States Constitution and how it provides for the structure of our government;
- Flag education, including proper flag display and flag salute;
- The elements of civil government shall include the primary functions of and interrelationships between the Federal Government, the state, and its counties, municipalities, school districts, and special districts; and,
- In order to encourage patriotism, the sacrifices that veterans have made in serving our country and protecting democratic values worldwide.

Section 233.061(2), F.S. In addition, school districts *may* provide voting instruction, including the use of county voting machines. Section 233.0612(10), F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Senate Bill 2194 requires each of Florida's 67 supervisors of elections to conduct voter education programs before the 2002 general election, and compare improperly-voted ballots from the 2000 general election with those in the 2002 election. The supervisors must report their findings to the Division of Elections, along with a description of the voter education program. The Division reports the results to the Legislature by February 1, 2003, along with recommendations for codifying in statute the best ideas from the most effective programs.

The bill appropriates an unspecified sum from General Revenue to the Division of Elections for the purpose of making *per capita* grants to the county supervisors of elections based on the number of registered voters in the county.

Also, the bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to expand civic education in high schools, including voter-education programs and basic instruction in voting skills.

Senate Bill 2194 takes effect July 1, 2001.

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:

The bill appropriates an unspecified sum from General Revenue for voter education efforts.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

The bill appropriates an unspecified sum for voter education efforts.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

#1 by Ethics & Elections:

Strike everything amendment. Requires the Department of State to adopt rules no later than March 1, 2002, prescribing minimum standards for voter education; mandates periodic, ongoing review of voter education efforts by county supervisors of elections and the Department of State; requires the Department of State to report on the effectiveness of voter education programs after each general election; requires the Department to periodically review voter education rules; requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules expanding civic education programs in high schools; and, changes the effective date to “upon becoming law.”