

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2026 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**First Reader**

House Bill 488 (Delegate Wilson, *et al.*)  
Rules and Executive Nominations

---

**Election Districts - General Assembly and Representatives in Congress**

---

This emergency bill alters the boundaries of the State’s eight congressional districts for the 2026 election of members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill also proposes a constitutional amendment to (1) establish that specified provisions of the State Constitution regarding legislative districts apply explicitly for the election of a member of the Senate and members of the House of Delegates, and (2) establish that the General Assembly has the power to grant original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court of Maryland to review the congressional districting of the State. The bill also proposes a temporary constitutional amendment to establish the boundaries of the eight congressional districts for the State proposed by the bill in the State constitution for statewide elections that occur between 2026 and the effective date of legislation establishing districts for the election of the State’s representatives in Congress following the 2030 decennial census.

---

**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** General fund expenditures increase by an indeterminate but significant amount for FY 2026 and potentially for FY 2027, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

**Local Effect:** While sufficient information was not available in time to fully analyze the impact of this legislation, it is assumed that the operations of local boards of elections are likely to be significantly affected, and expenditures for local boards of elections increase in FY 2026 and potentially in FY 2027 due to overtime and other costs, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

---

## Analysis

**Current Law:** Congressional district boundaries must be redrawn every 10 years following the decennial census to adjust for population changes. Congressional districts must comply with the U.S. Constitution and the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that congressional districts are subject to a strict population equality standard under Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Accordingly, the populations of congressional districts must be as close to mathematical equality as practicable.

Chapters 66 and 67 of 2010 require that population counts used to create the State's congressional district plan exclude individuals incarcerated in State or federal correctional facilities, as determined by the decennial census, who were not State residents prior to their incarceration. Individuals incarcerated in State or federal correctional facilities who were residents of the State prior to their incarceration must be counted at their last known residence.

The State's current congressional districting plan was enacted as Chapter 16 of 2022. The enacted congressional district map can be found [here](#).

**State/Local Expenditures:** The 2026 State primary election is June 11, 2026, and the State general election is November 3, 2026. As such, the State Board of Elections (SBE) and local boards of elections must implement the new congressional districting plan, as established under the bill, within a significantly compressed timeframe. SBE advises that in order to meet the State's primary election it must mail new voter identification cards to affected voters, contract mapping software services to identify the precincts affected by the change in congressional district boundaries, establish new polling and precinct locations, hire new election judges to staff the new precinct and polling locations, and conduct a public outreach and media campaign to alert the public to the changes in voter registrations. However, SBE cannot provide an estimate of those costs without first determining the changes in precinct locations established under the bill, which it is unable to do by the time this fiscal and policy note must be published.

Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that general fund expenditures for SBE increase in fiscal 2026 for it to conduct the aforementioned activities and implement the congressional district boundaries established under the bill in time for the June 2026 primary. Some expenses for the general election may carry over into fiscal 2027 as well. It is also assumed that SBE can handle future elections with resources that are normally budgeted following a decennial census for redistricting and related costs.

Associated preliminary implementation work by local boards of elections for both the primary and general elections can each take up to several weeks, likely resulting in

increased expenditures for the local boards, but a reliable estimate is not feasible at this time.

---

### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Governor's Office; Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts); Maryland Department of Planning; Maryland State Board of Elections; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 26, 2026  
jg/mcr

---

Analysis by: Thomas S. Elder

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510