



# HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

## FISCAL NOTE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1448

PRINTERS NO. 1796

PRIME SPONSOR: Sturla

### COST / (SAVINGS)

FUND	FY 2019/20	FY 2020/21
General Fund	\$0	\$0
County Funds	See "Fiscal Impact"	See "Fiscal Impact"
Municipal Funds	See "Fiscal Impact"	See "Fiscal Impact"

**SUMMARY:** Creates a ballot referendum to ask voters to expand the Volunteer Loan Assistance Program (VLAP) to allow the participation of fire, ambulance, and rescue services that utilize paid employees. This legislation would take effect in 60 days.

**ANALYSIS:** This legislation would permit the electorate of the Commonwealth to authorize the expanded use of VLAP for non-volunteer agencies, including departments and organizations that employ all paid employees or a combination of paid employees and volunteers via a referendum.

To that end, this legislation proposes a ballot question that reads as follows:

Do you favor expanding the use of the indebtedness authorized under 35 Pa.C.S. §§ 7367 (relating to authority to borrow) and 7378.1 (relating to referendum for additional indebtedness) for the volunteer loan assistance under 35 Pa.C.S. Ch. 73 Subch. E (relating to volunteer fire company, ambulance service and rescue squad assistance) to include loans to fire companies that provide services through paid personnel for the purpose of establishing and modernizing facilities to house firefighting apparatus equipment, ambulances and rescue vehicles, protective and communications equipment and any other accessory equipment necessary for the proper performance of such organizations' duties?

The question would be placed on the ballot at the next primary, municipal, or general election after July 1, 2019. The Secretary of the Commonwealth shall certify the question to the county boards of election and the referendum shall be conducted in accordance with the Election Code, except that the time limits for advertisement of notice of the referendum provided for in the Election Code may be waived for this ballot question.

This legislation shall not be construed as authorizing any additional borrowing for loan assistance to fire companies.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** This legislation would have no adverse fiscal impact on Commonwealth funds.

According to the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania, the referendum language would be included in a county's statutorily required advertisement of an election. Typically, the publication cost is based on the size of the advertisement, so there would likely be an incremental cost to each county. In addition, a county would bear the cost of printing the referendum language that will be posted at each polling place. Any estimate of these aggregate costs is indeterminable at this point.

Municipalities that utilize paid fire, ambulance, and rescue service employees would benefit from the permitted use of such loans if approved by the electorate. Any estimate as to how many municipalities would benefit and the aggregate amount of the loans is indeterminable at this point.

**PREPARED BY:** Tim Rodrigo  
House Appropriations Committee (R)

**DATE:** October 25, 2019

*Estimates are calculated using the best information available. Actual costs and revenue impact incurred may vary from estimates.*