



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF  
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

## Fiscal Note 2027 Biennium

Bill#/Title: SB0543.01: Revise judiciary laws

Primary Sponsor: Wylie Galt

Status: As Introduced

☐ Included in the Executive Budget

☐ Needs to be included in HB 2

☐ Significant Local Gov Impact

☐ Significant Long-Term Impacts

☐ Technical Concerns

☐ Dedicated Revenue Form Attached

### FISCAL SUMMARY

	<u>FY 2026 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2028 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2029 Difference</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Other	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Revenues</b>				
Other	\$375	\$0	\$750	\$0
<b>Net Impact</b>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>General Fund Balance</b>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

### Description of fiscal impact

SB 543 proposes revisions to filing fees for candidates running for the office of chief justice of the Supreme Court, or the office of justice of the Supreme Court, and allows candidates running for these offices to indicate party affiliation. If passed, The Office of the Secretary of State may incur system development costs that will be absorbed in the office's current budget. Additionally, candidates filing to run for these offices will be required to pay a filing fee of \$1,750.

### FISCAL ANALYSIS

#### Assumptions

#### Secretary of State's Office

- Both the chief justice and associate justices of the Supreme Court serve an eight-year term.
- If passed, SB 543 will change the candidate filing fee from a percentage of the position's salary to a flat candidate filing fee. Based on the current filing fee schedule, this will create a fee difference of approximately \$125. [\$1,750 proposed filing fee - \$1,625 current filing fee = \$125]
- One Supreme Court justice position will be open for election in FY 2026, and it is assumed that three candidates will file for this vacancy during the candidate filing period. It is assumed that the Office of the Secretary of State will collect approximately \$375 in additional revenue in candidate filing fees for FY 2026. [3 candidates x \$125 filing fee = \$375]
- Two Supreme Court justice positions will be open for election in FY 2028, and it is assumed that six candidates will file for these vacancies during the candidate filing period. It is assumed that the Office of the Secretary of State will collect approximately \$750 in additional revenue in candidate filing fees for FY 2028 [6 candidates x \$125 filing fee = \$750]

5. The MT voter registration and election management system may incur a one-time system development cost to adjust ballot style generation for the Primary and General Elections and update the candidate filing fee schedule. These costs will be absorbed in the office's current operating budget.

**Judiciary**

6. SB 543 will allow a candidate for the office of chief justice of the Supreme Court, or the office of justice of the Supreme Court, to indicate the candidate's political party affiliation on the candidate's declaration for nomination.
7. SB 543 does not have a fiscal impact on the Judicial Branch.

**Fiscal Analysis Table****Secretary of State's Office**

	<b><u>FY 2026 Difference</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2027 Difference</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2028 Difference</u></b>	<b><u>FY 2029 Difference</u></b>
<b><u>Fiscal Impact</u></b>				
<b><u>Expenditures</u></b>				
<b><u>Funding of Expenditures</u></b>				
<b><u>Revenues</u></b>				
Other	\$375	\$0	\$750	\$0
<b>TOTAL Revenues</b>	<b>\$375</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b><u>Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures)</u></b>				
Other	\$375	\$0	\$750	\$0

**Effect on County or Other Local Revenues or Expenditures****Montana Association of Counties**

1. The Montana Association of Counties assumes there will be no fiscal impact from SB 543.

  
 Sponsor's Initials

  
 Date

  
 Budget Director's Initials

3/30/2025  
 Date