

# Price tag rises for Ohio's August election after elections officials submit final bills

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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio's rare August special election will cost taxpayers more than originally thought after higher-than expected voter turnout drove additional costs to pay elections workers.

The state Controlling Board, a budgeting panel that includes state lawmakers, set aside an additional \$2 million on Monday to cover the cost of the election at the request of Secretary of State Frank LaRose. That brought the total amount of state earmarks for the election to \$18 million, though only \$17.5 million has been spent so far.

State Rep. Bride Sweeney, a Westlake Democrat who sits on the Controlling Board, pointed out during Monday's meeting that LaRose's office [initially estimated the election would cost \\$10 to \\$12 million](#), a number Senate President Matt Huffman shared with reporters as the Senate set aside \$15 million for the election.

Leslie Piatt, the top fiscal officer for LaRose, said the extra costs came after counties submitted their final bills for the election, and are due to higher-than-expected voter turnout.

"There were some counties that increased their salaries, increased the poll worker pay," Piatt said. "We saw a large number of temporary workers compared to the last election. And then of course when we were talking to the counties, they said the turnout was what drive a lot of those payroll costs."

Republican lawmakers set the August election, the first to decide a ballot issue in decades, to ask voters to approve a measure that would have made it harder for future constitutional amendments to pass by requiring them to get 60% in a statewide vote in order to pass, up from the longstanding 50% plus one vote.

While similar proposals have been debated in the past, they specifically scheduled the vote to try to foil State Issue 1, a proposal to add abortion rights to the state constitution that voters will decide in the upcoming Nov. 7 election.

LaRose, the state's top elections official, was a big backer of the proposal, which had support from all of the state's Republican leaders. He started floating the idea publicly as early as October 2022.

Voters soundly rejected the measure, 56% to 43%. Thirty-nine percent of registered voters, including an unusually large number of early in-person voters, participated in the election, more than triple the typical overall voter turnout for a summer special election.