

Election Commission to Add Over \$200,000 in Costs - 8/11/2003

Creating an election Commission will cost Champaign County taxpayers an additional \$228,720 next year according to Champaign County Clerk Mark Shelden. An election commission would necessitate the hiring of more staff and would require an increase in overtime as current efficiencies are lost by splitting off election duties from the County Clerk.

“Taking elections out of the hands of the voters is obviously bad for democracy,” said Shelden. What these figures show is that it’s bad for our pocketbooks too.”

The increased costs are a result of less efficiency with two smaller offices. “Every member of my staff is able to help out on elections during the busiest times,” said Shelden. “When the offices are split, the Election Commission will be forced to turn to additional untrained temporary help at greater expense and less efficiency.”

Shelden said that another problem will be that election workers would be unavailable to assist other areas of the office during slow times. “We have increased our level of automation throughout the office by using our election staff during non-election seasons,” said Shelden. “I don’t know what plans the Election Commission would have for their staff during times like we are having now when there is no election scheduled in the fall.”

Shelden also noted that there would be additional one time costs involved in this change including remodeling of offices, new phone lines, new computers and equipment, and new printing costs.