



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 159**

February Session, 2004

House Bill No. 5437

*House of Representatives, March 22, 2004*

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. O'ROURKE of the 32nd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

## **AN ACT AMENDING THE VOTER'S BILL OF RIGHTS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 9-236b of the general statutes, as amended by  
2 section 100 of public act 03-6 of the June 30 special session, is repealed  
3 and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2004*):

4 (a) The Secretary of the State shall provide each municipality with  
5 sufficient quantities of a poster size copy, at least eighteen by twenty-  
6 four inches, of a Voter's Bill of Rights, which shall be posted  
7 conspicuously at each polling place. The text of the Voter's Bill of  
8 Rights shall be:

9 "VOTER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

10 Every registered voter in this state has the right to:

11 (1) Inspect a sample ballot before voting;

12 (2) Receive instructions concerning how to operate voting  
13 equipment, on sample voting equipment before voting;

14 (3) Cast a ballot if the voter is in line when the polls are closing;

15 (4) Ask for and receive assistance in voting, including assistance in  
16 languages other than English where required by federal or state law;

17 (5) Vote free from coercion or intimidation by election officials or  
18 any other person; [and]

19 (6) Cast a ballot using voting equipment that accurately counts all  
20 votes;

21 (7) Vote by provisional ballot if the individual registered to vote and  
22 the individual's name is not on the voter list;

23 (8) Be informed of the process for restoring the individual's right to  
24 vote if the individual was incarcerated for a felony conviction; and

25 (9) Vote independently and in privacy at a polling place, regardless  
26 of physical disability.

27 If any of your rights have been violated, you have the right to file an  
28 official complaint with the State Elections Enforcement Commission at  
29 860-566-7106 or the United States Department of Justice at 1-866-733-  
30 2463. In addition, before leaving the polling place you may notify the  
31 moderator of the violation."

32 (b) In any municipality or voting district where federal or state law  
33 requires ballots to be made available in a language or languages other  
34 than English, the Voter's Bill of Rights shall also be made available in  
35 such language or languages.

36 (c) Sample ballots shall be made available at all polling places, and  
37 any voter shall be permitted to inspect a sample ballot before voting.

38 (d) Any voter standing in line at a polling place at the time when  
39 polls are scheduled to close shall be permitted to vote.

40 (e) For use at elections for federal office, the Secretary of the State  
41 shall prescribe and the municipal clerk shall provide for all polling  
42 places in the municipality: (1) Instructions on how to cast a provisional  
43 ballot, (2) instructions for mail-in registrants and first-time voters who  
44 register to vote by mail on or after January 1, 2003, (3) general  
45 information concerning voting rights under federal and Connecticut  
46 laws, including information on the right of an individual to cast a  
47 provisional ballot and instructions on how to contact the appropriate  
48 officials if these rights are alleged to have been violated, and (4)  
49 general information on federal and state laws concerning prohibitions  
50 on acts of fraud and misrepresentation.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2004</i>

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 05 \$	FY 06 \$
Secretary of the State	GF - Cost	6,000	None

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill adds additional rights to the Voter’s Bill of Rights and requires the Secretary of the State (SOTS) to include these new rights on posters at all polling places. SOTS will incur costs of \$6,000 to create, translate into Spanish, and re-print the Voter’s Bill of Rights.

**OLR Bill Analysis**

HB 5437

**AN ACT AMENDING THE VOTER'S BILL OF RIGHTS****SUMMARY:**

This bill adds to rights afforded to registered voters in this state. Specifically, it gives them the right to:

1. vote by provisional ballot if they registered to vote but their name does not appear on the voter list;
2. information about restoring their right to vote that was forfeited after their incarceration for a felony conviction; and
3. vote independently and privately at a polling place, regardless of their physical disability.

The bill also informs voters who believe that any of these rights is violated of their right to notify an on-site elections moderator or file a complaint with the State Elections Enforcement Commission at 860-566-7106 or the U.S. Department of Justice at 1-866-733-2463.

The secretary of the state must include these rights on the Voter's Bill of Rights posters that she is currently required to distribute to each municipality. The posters must be conspicuously placed at all polling places.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2004

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 17    Nay 0