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City of Hartford  
Testimony for the Record  
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS  
Wednesday, February 28, 2007  
Legislative Office Building  
Hartford  
In support of HB 5977**

Good afternoon, Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso, Senator Hartley, Representative Clemons & Members of the Committee. I submit this testimony in support of H. B. No. 5977 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE BALLOT.

I support H. B. No. 5977 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PLACEMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON THE BALLOT not for political reasons but because this bill will be good for democracy in Connecticut. Currently, party placement on a ballot is determined by the party of the sitting Governor, with the top line reserved for the party of the governor. This arbitrary standard fits its purpose, to have some way of determining ballot placement, however, it does not achieve any other goals.

A change in the standard of ballot placement could have a tremendous positive effect on democracy in Connecticut. With the passage of campaign finance reform, we have empowered political parties in this state to play a greater roll in financing campaigns. I think it is important to also empower them to play a greater roll in our entire electoral process.

H.B. 5977 does just that. It links ballot placement to the number of registered voters in the State, giving the party with the most number of registered voters the top placement on the ballot. In turn, it gives incentives to the political parties who are on subsequent lines to expend time and effort into registering people to vote.

This traditional roll of political parties has fallen by the wayside in recent years and in turn we have seen a dramatic decrease in the percentage of registered eligible voters over the past twenty-five years. Despite our best efforts only 42,000 of the 124,000 residents of Hartford are registered voters. The City only has so much money to expend on registering voters. H.B. 5977 creates a new avenue to encourage political parties to register people to vote that will have a tremendous increase in the number of people participating in our democracy.

With the best interests of our participatory democracy in mind, I support H.B. 5977. Thank you for your time.