

Government Administration and Elections Committee
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Democratic Registrar of Voters Town of Windham

House Bill No. 6251

Chairmen and Members of the Committee:

The portion of the bill I would like the committee to consider is the section which describes how a person may apply for admission as an elector on election day. It is an admirable idea but one that compromises our organization which now assures voters that there can be no tampering with the voting process.

. The logistics of this plan to allow people to register on election day really makes me uneasy as a voter and registrar. Candidates and party workers can pick people up, bring them to the office, they can register, vote, never vote again, and then someone is owed a favor. New laws have just taken effect tightening up the distribution of absentee applications and absentee ballots making more paper work but now there is less tampering with them.. Why continue to keep accurate up-to-date lists, check information cards, send people letters, and do a canvas each year that is expensive and time-consuming? Why not just let anyone who wants to vote show a letter with their address and let them vote. Perhaps we should take a look at our whole voting system instead of creating piece-meal laws.

The registrar's office is a busy place the day before and election day. There are absentee ballots to check off and count, lists to run off, poll workers to replace, election materials to check and deliver, and polls to set up besides fielding phone calls from people who want information about when and where and if they can vote. Election day is making sure the polls have been set-up and are running correctly, receiving calls to confirm voters who have changed their address, dealing with machine malfunctions and telephone problems, redirecting poll workers because of absenteeism, confirming people on the inactive list, and co-ordinating delivery of food. All goes well until the printer, the telephones, or the computer is not working.

We would be making a situation for human error to increase. One person may have to be assigned to the particular job of registering new voters, especially during the presidential election. Towns can not afford to spend more money on elections. Only after the fact, if the letter is returned to the registrar's office will the elections committee investigate. The vote has already been cast and counted unlike a provisional ballot. The cases of fraud investigated by the committee each year is less than twelve. Let's keep it that way.

Every citizen has the right to vote. They also have the right to drive, shop, enjoy entertainment, receive an education, marry, expand their family, etc. But there are restrictions to all facets of our life to some degree. It is a small restriction to register to vote a week ahead of an election. Elections take place around the same time every year and most elections that people are interested in are highly advertised. Citizens in Connecticut need to take some responsibility to become involved in the election process. The media is now talking about the presidential election and that is not until next year. If someone wants to vote for the president, they should register now. Even if they move within that time they can plan to register a week before the election. Also, there is a provision for people who just turned 18, became a United States citizen, or moved into a new town up to the day before the election. We should encourage the people who are registered to vote, not weaken our organization that protects the accuracy of our vote.