

IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 6251: An Act Authorizing Election Day Registration

Testimony submitted to the **Government, Administration and Elections Committee**

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By Urania Petit, University of Connecticut School of Social Work Student

Good morning, Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and members of the Government, Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Urania Petit and I am a student at Uconn School of Social Work. It is a privilege to be here, and I commend Democracy Works for taking steps towards making EDR a reality.

We live in a different world today, when most of our election laws were written when people's lifestyles were much slower paced and less unpredictable and demanding. In today's fast-paced world filled with responsibilities to jobs, schools, families, friends, and communities, many people cannot find time to register and vote or are unaware of the voter registration deadlines or do not realize that they have to re-register to vote because they have moved. Last summer when I worked on a campaign, the list handed to me on a particular community in Hartford was ineffective because I knew that part of that community no longer existed. People were still registered to that particular area, which they vacated for a shopping Center. I wondered if they knew that they needed to re-register with a new change of address, and if they did not re-register, their voting privileges are at stake. Then it dawned on me if we have same day voter registration that would ease their frustrations and allow the process to work.

Our communities are very different now that they used to be. People who have come to this State come with a variety of voting and electoral backgrounds and are unaware of those restrictions that is in place and therefore do not register to vote in a timely fashion.

Restrictive voter registration deadlines effectively disenfranchise these people from participating in our democracy in the most fundamental way by voting. It is time for us to bring our 18th century voting system into the 21st century and make it work for modern citizens.

Restrictive voter registration deadlines are simply unnecessary today and effectively disenfranchise people who may not be aware of the registration deadlines or who have missed them for whatever reason. I believe that Election Day Registration will increase voter turnout. As we seen on an average, the states with Election Day Registration have, increase their voter participation.

Two New England states have already adopted EDR, Maine and New Hampshire. Let us make Connecticut the third New England state that makes Election Day Registration facilitates voting in a way that is simple, effective, and beneficial to both voters and election administrators.

If the eligible population does not or cannot vote, our democracy suffers. We must make every effort to remove obstacles to voting and put Connecticut into the forefront of voter modernization practices. Election Day Registration gives a voice to the voiceless and provides a means for qualified voters to participate in the electoral process. As an Immigrant, I have heard numerous times that the right to **“vote is the foundation of our democracy”** and **“Voting is a right and not a privilege”**. Therefore, I believe that voting should be as easy and accessible to all.

Allowing eligible citizens to register and vote on the same day is an effective and safe way to significantly increase voter turnout and allow all citizens to exercise these rights.

As many has stated before me, making voting easy and accessible for eligible voters is necessary for our democratic process to survive and thrive.

Thank you.