



Susan Bysiewicz
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

**Testimony of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz
Government Administration & Elections Committee
March 30, 2007**

Good Morning Chairman Caruso, Chairwoman Slossberg and members of the GAE Committee. For the record, my name is Susan Bysiewicz and I am the Secretary of the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of a bill on your public hearing agenda regarding Connecticut's Presidential primary.

S. B. # 1184: AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS

I am in strong support of moving the date of Connecticut's 2008 Presidential primaries, currently scheduled for March 4th, to Feb. 5th. If adopted, Connecticut would join 22 other states – comprising of more than 40% of the nation's population - which are planning to hold a primary or caucus on Feb. 5th. Citing a lack of attention from candidates and a desire to be deemed "relevant" in the upcoming presidential elections, more than two dozen states are considering moving their primary elections from late spring/early summer to February 2008. The nation's current primary process is 'broken' and I commend this committee for taking this step to reform Connecticut's system.

Connecticut voters deserve to have their voices heard. As more and more states move their primary date up and leapfrog over Connecticut, our residents are in danger of effectively being disenfranchised. By having Connecticut join this so-called 'Super-duper' Tuesday, we are ensuring voters will be able to have an impact on this crucial election. These moves by other states would set up a potential "Super-size Tuesday" with potentially as many as 23 states holding their primary election on Feb. 5, 2008, the first day under national party rules in which states can hold elections.

As the Chair of the Government Administration and Elections Committee in 1995, I sponsored legislation to move Connecticut's Presidential primary so as to keep it aligned with the majority of New England states. The Connecticut General Assembly approved this measure, moving the date of the state's Presidential primaries from the 4th Monday in March to the first Tuesday in March. Since 1995, Connecticut has essentially been part of a New England primary, voting on

the same day in March as Vermont, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Rhode Island lawmakers are currently considering a proposal to move their primary to Feb. 5th and the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, William Galvin, has told me that it's possible his state could also move its primary.

Connecticut didn't start this tidal wave but I cannot stand by and allow our voters to become irrelevant. Ultimately, the national political parties must come together and enact real reform.

I would like to thank this Committee for allowing this important issue to be heard. In addition, it is my understanding that the Committee will review if town committee primaries should also be moved to February 5th, 2008. I am available if you have any questions and I look forward to working with you.