

Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

Committee Members

Patricia Strauss, Westport

Co-Chair

Joyce Mascena, Glastonbury

Co-Chair

Jeff Barske, Thompson

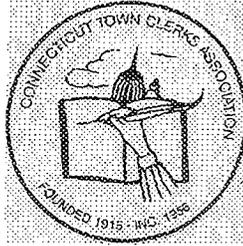
Lisa Terry, Montville

Antoinette Spinelli, Waterbury

Laura Francis, Durham

Bernice Dixon, Vernon

George Buckbee, New Milford



Advisory Board Members

Joseph Camposeo, Manchester

Irene Masse, Meriden

Katie Wall, Berlin

Sandra Russo, Middletown

Alan Jepson, Milford

Therese Pac, Bristol

2007 Legislative Committee

Written Testimony of
Joyce Mascena, Legislative Co-Chair (Town Clerk of Glastonbury)
Connecticut Town Clerks Association

Wednesday, February 28, 2007
General Assembly's Government Administration and Elections Committee

Good afternoon/morning Senator Slossberg, Representative Caruso and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee (GAE), my name is Joyce Mascena and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA). I am Co-Chair of our Legislative Committee and the Town Clerk of Glastonbury. I am here today to testify about the following bills relating to elections.

SJ 5, AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTIONS ON THE CATEGORIES OF CITIZENS WHO MAY VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT.

We strongly believe that efforts to increase voter participation should be seriously considered. In the case of SJ-5 however, this bill eliminates the stipulations for being eligible to vote by absentee ballot.

Over the years, these requirements have been in place to help those with an illness, a physical disability, in active service in the armed forces, absent from the town during all the hours of voting, for religious tenets or engaging in their duties as an election official at a polling place other than their own during all the hours of voting. A Constitutional change of this magnitude would make voting by absentee ballot a routine process and would not address a voter's special need. With all due respect to the proponents of this bill, we believe that a study to evaluate the merits of voting by mail would better serve our constituents at this time.

HB 1312, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN COMPENSATION OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS.

We certainly support increased participation by Registrars of Voters, as well as Town Clerks, when it comes to education and training. This proposal encourages that participation which will most definitely be very beneficial to both groups.

HB 5989, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR THE ISSUANCE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS.

Three years ago, the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association and representation from ROVAC and the State Elections Enforcement Commission developed the current procedures for the issuance of Absentee Ballots. The intent of this raised bill reverses many of the procedures that were developed by this committee to ensure the accountability of the Absentee Ballot process. Although enhancements can be of benefit, we cannot support legislation, which changes the overall intention of our effort.

HB 6251, AN ACT AUTHORIZING ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION

We believe that the concept of permitting voter registration on Election Day will be a major catalyst to increasing citizen participation. The right to vote is a fundamental privilege and should not be constrained by time frames, which restrict ones participation in the election process.

HB 7259, AN ACT TO ESTABLISH NEW PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENT THE MARK SENSE SYSTEM.

HB 7257, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CENTRALIZED VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

HB 7261, AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS.

With the upcoming use of new election technology, we believe that changes to the way elections are administered locally will significantly enhance the overall process. This raised bill redefines the responsibilities of the Town Clerk's and Registrars of Voters in concert with the implementation of "mark sense" scanning technology. The leadership of the CTCA has had dialogue with the Secretary of the State and with ROVAC to reach this milestone of an agreement. We firmly believe that the modifications in these three bills will clarify our duties and the manner in which we serve our voters. We strongly recommend the passage of these three bills.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.