

ROVAC
Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut

Government Administration and Elections - February 29, 2008

**HB 5665 AAC CHANGES TO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS
AND CERTAIN COMPENSATION OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS**

**Request to amend HB5665 to include compensation for Registrars of
Voters attending two educational conferences.**

Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Caruso

I am Melissa J. Russell, Registrar of Voters; Bethlehem

Thank you for raising this ROVAC bill. As has been noted, language addressing compensation as submitted in the ROVAC request is not included in this bill. I would like to take two minutes to address the purpose and need to re-instate the language as passed this committee last year.

As a fairly new Registrar – I took the position eight months ago – I have found the classes and instruction offered at each of the ROVAC conferences to be invaluable. As we have seen in the recent Municipal Election and Presidential Primary, the procedures and laws governing our elections are changing dramatically, and Registrars who are not up to speed on those changes run the risk of failing to hold their elections in the proper manner.

However, many of the Registrars I have talked to around the state, whether they are new, like me, or have held their positions for some time, do not attend the conferences, or attend only one day out of two or three, thereby missing out on crucial new information. One of the main reasons that I hear for Registrars not attending some or all of the conferences is that they are not compensated for the time it takes to attend the classes, nor do they feel that they can make the repeated long drives it often entails to attend several days in a row.

We need to make it easy and worthwhile for the Registrars to attend these conferences. It benefits the voters, the candidates, and indeed our entire electoral process to ensure that the laws and procedures governing elections and primaries are followed correctly, and that all involved, particularly Registrars of Voters, are trained and retrained in those laws and procedures as often as possible.

And so I ask the committee to pass this legislation requiring municipalities to compensate Registrars for attending the conferences, and to pay the attendant conference fees, hotel accommodations, and mileage entailed therein.

