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HB 5665 AN ACT CONCERNING CHANGES TO THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS AND CERTAIN COMPENSATION OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS.

Good morning Chairman Caruso, Chairman Slossberg and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Bill Jenkins and I am here to talk about HB 5665. I am the Republican Registrar of Voters in the Town of Chaplin and have been serving in this capacity for two years.

I would like to thank the Committee for raising this bill and I particularly appreciate and **strongly favor** the following sections:

Section 5 in particular as it eliminates the present requirement to hold a voter registration session five weeks before any election. I find this session to be completely unnecessary as we have never had anyone show up in our offices during the times we've held this registration during the time I've been a registrar. The proposed changes bring the statutes up to date with how we run our operation using the SOTS's centralized voter registration system.

Sections 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 are all very good **proposed changes** to the election laws that run the gambit from updating those statutes to be more consistent with the flexibility for us to produce voter lists with the centralized voter registration system that the SOTS's office has developed and improved over the years and making things easier for us registrars and the people we serve. None of these changes will disenfranchise the public and will vastly improve the statutes making things easier, more efficient AND will save municipalities money in the long run.

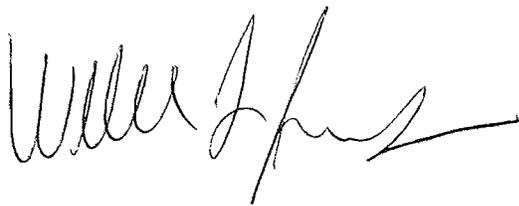
I am however slightly concerned with the proposed changes in Section 2. I see no need at all to change 9-168 as it is in its present form which specifies that the LEGISLATIVE BODY of the town is the entity who determines the location of polling places in the town. I DO NOT believe the decision to designate a town's polling place should rest SOLELY with the registrars which is what this section seems to be trying to do. The proposed change also removes the Town Clerk from the decision making process which I do not support. I feel the Town Clerk is a very important office in any municipality and should remain part of this important decision making process.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed change in Section 16 that allows people who are admitted as electors on the day of a special election or referendum to vote in that election. At this point, we don't have "same day voter registration" for regular elections or primaries and we **MUST** be consistent across the board so as to not cause confusion with election officials and most importantly, the voters!

I oppose the changes offered in Section 18 which appears to remove the Town Clerk as someone who can assist a disabled person in registering to vote. In many small towns, the Town Clerk is available to the public for far many more hours during the week than the registrars and I believe this change while well intentioned, may in fact make it more difficult for disabled people to register to vote.

I oppose Section 19 which proposes to prohibit a candidate on the ballot from assisting a person who requests assistance to vote because of reasons of blindness, disability or inability to write or read the ballot. I feel this is just plain wrong. While I support the current law which prohibits the elector's employer, an agent of the elector's employer or any officer or agent of the elector's union from assisting, I do not believe we should prohibit a voter from wanting a candidate to assist them if they need it. I also find the proposed requirement to record the fact that an elector refuses to provide the name of the person providing assistance to be far too vague and not adding any value. Where are we supposed to "record" this refusal? The proposed statute as written doesn't tell us **WHERE** to record this. Should it be recorded on the voter's list, in the moderators notes, on the moderator's return or somewhere else? Vague statutes like this only lead to confusion and will more than likely cause you to revisit this again next session to correct this problem. Let's either not do it at all or get it right the first time.

On an ending note, I don't understand why this bill has "certain compensation of registrars of voters" in its title because I can't find anywhere in this bill that compensation of registrars is even mentioned, addressed or proposed to be changed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.