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TO:

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 2200  
Hartford, CT 06106

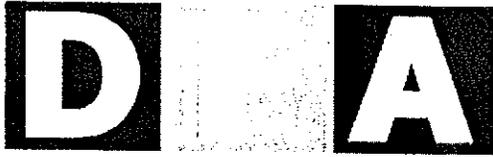
Good Morning. My name is Jim Dean. I am the Chair of Democracy for America (DFA). DFA is a national political action community, founded in 2004 by my brother Governor Howard Dean MD, former Chair of the Democratic National Committee.

DFA's mission is leadership development and citizen empowerment – helping citizens take responsibility over the political process. We do this through local and national organizing, and on-the-ground-action. We do it through a training program that helps those who want to work on legislative or candidate campaigns and run for office; and we do it through candidate support. Over the last four years approximately 30,000 individuals have been through our training program, and we have supported over 1000 candidates running for office. Our action comes from our network and membership - over 725,000 members, 800+ groups (including some in CT) organized in nearly every state.

I want to thank The Government Administration and Elections Committee for having me here today to testify on behalf of Election Day Registration. I also want to thank you for all the hard work that you and your staff have put in to making elections in Connecticut work.

I do not say this lightly. As part of my job, I travel all over the country in support of our members and the work they are doing. I can tell you that my experience over the last several years tells me that we are very lucky here in Connecticut. While we have problems just like anyplace else, the outcomes over issues such as voting technology and vote counting have been far better here than most other states that I have worked in.

Connecticut is a leader in many parts of the electoral process.



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For example: Over three years ago, Connecticut became one of three states to pass legislation for clean, publicly financed elections, establishing the State as a leader in saving the tax payers from the pay-to-play politics that has previously afflicted our state and other states. I share the hopes of many voters and taxpayers that this program will continue to be fully funded.

Another example is the introduction of the National Popular Vote into the legislative process in Connecticut. This is a great opportunity to join other states in streamlining and restoring credibility to our Presidential Elections by respecting the direct will of the voters and moving our country beyond the abuses of electoral math as evidenced in Florida in 2000 and Ohio in 2004. I am hopeful that National Popular Vote will get a full hearing in the Legislature.

This brings me to the purpose of my testimony today which is to advocate for Election Day Registration (EDR) or Same Day Registration. One of the few drawbacks in our State's election system is the myriad of confusing voter registration deadlines. The presence of deadlines for registering to vote in primaries, separate deadlines to switch parties to vote in a primary, and the separate deadlines for both in a General Election is something that can and should be streamlined.

It is my opinion that Election Day Registration goes a long way toward streamlining the system by reducing the barriers involving different registration deadlines and – MOST IMPORTANTLY – increasing citizen participation by making voting in Connecticut easier for all of its citizens.

On this point, EDR is really a system that reflects the reality of the world we live in today. Our population is like that of the rest of the country where adults of voting age are on the move, and have little time for things outside of work and family. In my view EDR resolves challenges for busy and mobile voters by simply reducing the number of steps and time that voters have to take in the registration process.

Finally, this system is already in place in several other states. These states reflect the great diversity of our country. Equally as important, these states have withstood the challenges of close, competitive elections, many involving recounts of one kind or another.



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Election Day Registration can work, it can make political participation easier, and I hope that you will act favorably on this issue as it goes through the legislative process.

Thank you again for having me here today.

Respectfully Submitted,

James H. Dean  
Chair  
Democracy for America