

Sam Tracy
Public Testimony regarding Proposed HB 5750

Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

My name is Sam Tracy and I am a lifetime resident of South Windsor, CT. I am currently a student at the University of Connecticut, where I am studying political science. I am also a member of our school's student government, and have worked at the polls multiple times. In 2010, I worked with a group that registered over 1,500 UConn students to vote, and encouraged students to get out to the polls on Election Day. I was dismayed when I later found out that only about 750 students voted (out of about 4,000 registered) in the 2010 elections.

While there were many factors contributing to this dismal turnout, many students claimed that they had classes all day and were not able to make it to the polls. At UConn, classes usually take place either on Monday/Wednesday/Friday or on Tuesday/Thursday. Many students take most, or all, Tuesday/Thursday classes in order to have longer weekends. As Election Day is always on a Tuesday, this makes it difficult for many students to find time among classes, homework, and meals in order to vote. Making Election Day a state holiday may influence UConn to cancel classes on Election Day, which would encourage students to vote more frequently.

Also, this bill is important on a state level. I know of eight states that currently have Election Day designated a state holiday: Delaware, Hawaii, Kentucky, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. In 2010, their voter turnout rates were 48.7%, 41.1%, 42.4%, 47.8%, 36.5%, 34.9%, 44.6%, and 37.4%, respectively. This is in comparison to a nationwide turnout rate of 40.9%. Therefore, 5 of the 8 states had turnout rates that were higher than the national average. While there are obviously many other factors contributing to voter turnout, this shows that there is a measurable improvement in turnout among states that have made Election Day a holiday.

I strongly support this bill, as it will make it easier for student, workers, and all citizens to cast their vote on Election Day.

Sincerely,

Sam Tracy