

**ROVAC**  
**REGISTRARS OF VOTERS**  
**ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**

GAE Testimony: February 14, 2011    Submitted by George Cody, Reg. of Voters, New Canaan

**HB 939 AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS RELATED STATUTES**

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*Submitted in support of the public testimony given at the Feb. 14, 2011 hearing.*

Sen. Slossberg, Sen. McLachlan, Rep. Miron, and members of the GAE Committee. My name is George Cody, and I would like to speak in favor of that part of **HB 939 AAC Election Related Statutes, Section 54b**, which relates to the reporting of votes for cross-endorsed candidates. In earlier Testimony today the committee heard from several people opposed to any changes to existing statutes, changes that would clarify party assignment of votes cast in cross endorsed situations.

Cross endorsement was allowed to appear on the ballot under the old lever machine statutes, but the lever machines would allow only one vote, thereby leaving party selection to the voter. Currently, tabulators (and statutes) allow voters to fill 'bubbles' for a candidate on each line under which his name appears in cross-endorsed situations. Tabulators are programmed to count these 'double' votes as a single vote for the candidate, but then would be listed as 'unknown' as to party assignment. At the end of the night, all 'unknown' votes would be assigned arbitrarily to a party chosen by the Moderator, Head Moderator, or Registrar.

The confusion created by the 'unknown' line is best left to the voter to correct. The proposed changes would call for modifications to the tabulator to disallow "double" voting. The ballot would be returned to the voter with the option for correction. Rejection of a ballot by the tabulator does not 'destroy' the ballot, but rather offers the voter the opportunity to cast a new ballot designating which party was to receive his vote. Left unchanged, all lines on the original ballot would be counted.

- The proposed changes offer the best opportunity in determining and carrying out the will and intent of the voter.
- It removes the need for election officials from making partisan decisions.
- It will clarify Delegate, Districting, Major/Minor party ballot access formulas, since most of these formulas are based on the number of votes that the party receives.
- It assures that the cross-endorsed candidate gets the allotted vote.
- Suggestions that 'unknown' votes be sent to the Secretary of The State for their assignment, from past accounts would be considered an unwelcome passing of the buck.
- Claims that voters would be inconvenienced and votes lost could easily be mitigated by additional polling place and ballot instructions.

Put simply, assignment of 'unknown' votes is a political decision and should not become a perceived integrity issue for election officials. Let the voter decide.