



Carole Young-Kleinfeld
Registrar of Voters
Wilton Town Hall
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, Connecticut 06897

March 2, 2012

Support for:

- HB5024 AAC Voting Rights
- HJ-2--RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING

I am Carole Young-Kleinfeld, one of the registrars of voters from the Town of Wilton. I appreciate the chance to present testimony in support of HB 5024 AAC Voting Rights and HJ-2 A Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution to allow for No-excuse Absentee Voting. HB 5024 includes provisions for Election Day Registration and online voter registration, both of which I support in the interest of increasing voter participation.

HB5024—Section 1. It's time that Connecticut joined the ranks of other states that have moved forward to enact Election Day Registration, a measure that increases turn-out, assists young people and newly relocated people in participating in their democracy, and addresses possible errors in processing voter applications.

In my experience as a registrar, a deputy registrar before that, and a poll worker even before that, I have seen many instances of citizens—otherwise eligible to vote—denied the opportunity because they missed a deadline or found themselves not on the voter list, even though they were sure that they had submitted their voter registration materials. In a close election, that lone disenfranchised voter, who was not allowed to register and to vote because he missed an arbitrary deadline, could have decided an election.

Every voter application form contains a sworn statement signed by the voter under penalty of perjury. Studies from other states show no evidence that voters abuse Election Day Registration by impersonating other voters or that they spend Election Day driving from town to town, trying to vote twice. All of us who believe in the importance of voter participation know just how difficult it is to get voters to vote once, much less multiple times, risking felony convictions.

I believe that our central voter registration system can handle voter registration on Election Day. Our town rarely experiences any technical problems with the system. Moreover, the Secretary of the State's office has always been readily accessible for assistance with any problem on Election Day. Although the proposal before you does allow local elections officials a year's time to prepare for implementation in 2013, I urge you to decide the question of EDR from the standpoint of eligible voters and not from viewpoint of the convenience of the officials.

In my view, EDR is a measure whose time has come and is clearly the "right thing to do" for Connecticut voters.

Section 11 of HB 5024 provides for online voter registration, using a model that has worked well in several other states. As a member of the Secretary of the States' Election Performance Task Force, I had the chance to hear a presentation about Arizona and Wisconsin's online registration program which decreases clerical errors, shortens the processing time of voter applications, and appeals to

voters. The program presupposes an existing record at the DMV, but allows a voter to register—or to make changes—online from their home instead of downloading, printing, and mailing a hard copy to their local officials. Online changes are sent electronically from the Secretary of the State's office to local officials for processing and any additional verification. The Brennan Center at NYU studied this measure and found that it saves time and money for voters and officials.

Finally, I support all changes in sHJ-2 in Sections 1, 2, and 3, which remove restrictive language on absentee voting from the state Constitution, thereby allowing the legislature to consider the form in which absentee voting should take in Connecticut.

I urge you to vote yes to HB5024 and HJ-2.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Young-Kleinfeld