



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Gregg Schuster, First Selectman

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Gregg Schuster, First Selectman of Colchester, and I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present testimony today.

Ensuring that all citizens who are legally entitled to vote are given the opportunity to do so is an essential function of government. For centuries, Americans have fought and died for the right to vote. I can think of nothing more American than working to ensure that we increase both the number of citizens registered to vote and the participation of those who are already registered.

However, I also strongly believe that it is our duty as elected officials to ensure the integrity of the process and make sure that all individuals registered to vote are legally entitled to do so. I therefore must oppose House Bill 5024 in its current form and urge you not to adopt it.

As elected officials, we all know what election day is like. It can often be very busy and chaotic. Voters may come to the wrong polling location, registrars must assist citizens who have an issue with their registration, and poll workers must supervise all activities in accordance with the law.

In Colchester, we are already stretched thin with three voting districts. Due to the recent redistricting, we will soon have to implement a fourth voting district. It is already a challenge to find the necessary poll workers for those districts and I would hate to add more of a burden to our officials.

If election day voter registration is allowed to pass, I don't see how election officials can guarantee that those registering are legally allowed to do so or did not register that same day in another municipality.

In addition to the potential for voter fraud, this adds another unfunded mandate on municipalities. We would now be responsible for registering these voters which will increase the need for workers.

Again, I believe very strongly that all those entitled to vote should be given the opportunity to register. However, we must prevent voter fraud at all costs. Currently, people have 364 days in a year to register to vote. I believe that is ample time and the registrars in this state do a fantastic job of quickly verifying and adding voters to the rolls. Adding election day registration is going one step too far and is only going to add to the potential for voter fraud.

Thank you all again for your time and consideration.