



**Testimony
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Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Government Administration and Elections Committee
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The Connecticut Council of Small Towns supports SB-218, **An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries**, which will allow small towns to reduce the number of polling places and moderators for primaries.

Under current law, towns are required to have the same number of polling locations for both primary and general elections even though voter turnout is significantly lower for party primaries. An estimated 50% of the state's 2.4 million registered voters aren't even eligible to participate in primaries because they are not registered with a party.

Requiring towns to use and staff the same number of polling places is expensive and unnecessary. In fact, the Office of Fiscal Analysis has estimated that the bill could save some towns up to \$25,000 per year. Given the difficult financial circumstances facing towns, it makes sense to give them the option to reduce costs in this manner.

By providing that notice be sent to electors regarding the location of the polling places, the bill ensures that citizens will have the information they need to vote in party primaries.

In addition, COST urges committee members to consider ways of addressing concerns in small towns with split districts following redistricting. Polling locations are required to be located within each precinct, which may require small towns with split districts to add polling locations. There is a process for requesting an exception from this requirement from the Secretary of State's Office and we are hopeful this will address these concerns. However, we urge the committee to further review this issue to determine whether more flexibility is needed to ensure that small towns with split districts do not incur substantial additional costs.

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