

**State of Connecticut
Government Administration and Elections Committee**

Testimony of Brian Jud

March 2, 2012

Dear Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Gayle Slossberg, Rep. Russ Morin,
and Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Brian Jud. I am currently a master's student at the UConn School of Social Work, as well as a lifelong resident of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

As part of my school curriculum, I intern at the Nancy A. Humphreys Institute for Political Social Work. Part of our Institute's mission statement is to help facilitate the political empowerment of clients. To achieve this, we at the Institute have done significant work to promote voter registration and voter turnout among eligible populations.

As a social worker, I take it upon myself to apply a human rights perspective to the work that I do. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world's preeminent human rights document, all persons have the right to "universal and equal suffrage." Therefore, as a political social worker, I consider voter intimidation, interference, and disenfranchisement to be significant and fundamental violations of any individual's human rights.

I feel that attempting to directly affect or influence an individual's vote in a forcible way, such as the situations described in the text of this bill, is both cowardly and low. Thus, I fully support this bill, HB 5022, which will make it a felony to engage in varying types of voter intimidation, interference, and disenfranchisement. Our country has had too much negative history around these issues to allow such situations to happen in the future. The State of Connecticut has historically had one of the best track records as far as voter intimidation and interference, and this bill will only serve to make our state an even better leader across the nation.

I am very pleased that the Legislature, the Governor, and Secretary Merrill have proposed this legislation and I urge its passage, which will keep Connecticut at the forefront of voter empowerment. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Brian Jud
University of Connecticut School of Social Work