



**Town of Fairfield** • Registrar of Voters Office  
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Testimony of Matthew Waggner, Registrar  
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### **Testimony on HB 5533: An Act Concerning Vacancies in Certain Town Offices and Minority Representation**

Dear Co-Chairs Morin and Slossberg, Ranking Members Hwang and McLachlan, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

I wanted to share a few thoughts on HB 5533, which would require that municipal offices with appointment-filled vacancies appear on the next November election ballot, even if the office would not otherwise appear on the ballot at that election. I do not have a strong opinion on the concept, though I would note that it is in keeping with the special election for U.S. Senate policy which was passed in 2009. However, if you do take up the bill, there are a few points you may wish to address:

- 1) My understanding is that the intention behind this bill is for these offices to appear at the next municipal election, though as written the bill would have the effect of placing these races on State and Federal election ballots as well.
- 2) The language exempting local legislative bodies and boards of education would deprive voters of the ability to fill vacancies in the local offices which interest them the most. Note that in many small and medium-size towns, the Board of Selectmen is considered to be the legislative body of the town. The bill also appears to silently exempt most "single" municipal offices, such as Tax Collector, Treasurer, Assessor, municipal clerk, or Mayor.
- 3) Please note that the September 1 determination of offices to be placed on the ballot occurs after absentee ballots are sent to military voters.
- 4) To prevent confusion, it may be beneficial to include conforming changes to the nomination, petitioning, and primary calendar for these vacant municipal offices, as HB 5533 is silent on when and how nominations are to be made for these races.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these subjects.

Sincerely yours,

Matt Waggner