



REGISTRARS OF VOTERS ~ 27 WEST MAIN STREET ~ ROOM 507 ~ NEW BRITAIN, CT ~ 06051  
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Testimony on Raised Bill No. 5024

Peter J. Gostin, Board of Directors, ROVAC

### **AAC Election Day Registration (EDR)**

Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin, and members of the GAE Committee. Good day. My name is Peter Gostin, I'm a Registrar of Voters from New Britain, and a member of the Board of Directors for ROVAC. I speak to you today about HB 5204.

The portion of the bill I will focus my testimony on is Sections 1 – 10 pertaining to Election Day Registration. Although I come here today as an individual Registrar, like the large majority of ROVAC members I am in opposition to EDR for a host of reasons. But I will focus on just a couple of them along with providing you with some research information that I undertook regarding the last presidential election in 2008.

First, I'd like to share the following facts from New Britain in the 2008 election:

Number of Provisional Ballots Issued:	657
Applicants Who Registered	117 (18%)
Applicants Not Did Not Register	483 (74%)
Applicants With Undeliverable Addresses	35 (5%)
Duplicate Applications (already voters)	22 (3%)

The fact that New Britain had a 5% return of undeliverable mail addresses and another 3% with duplicate registrations should cause all of us great concern, as we know elections are many times won or lost by a handful of votes. While EDR would do away with unregistered people casting ballots, imagine if every town in CT this year experienced the same level of undeliverable mail, as statistically they might. The number of questionable ballots cast by voters not giving proper addresses across the state would likely register in the thousands, certainly enough to bring into question the appropriateness and even the legality of the votes cast for president.

This leads us to a second issue relating to identity verification. The current laws of CT are too lax and should be revisited for strengthening. The fact that someone can register to vote simply upon presenting a drivers license, the last four digits of their social security number, or a current utility bill which shows their residential address is no certain proof of their citizenship. While the Registrar's office is a place to extend our Constitutional rights and welcome as many new voters as possible, it should also be a protector of those rights by ensuring a thorough review of a person's status as a citizen prior to them becoming a registered voter.

The third issue pertains to the voter turnout increases / decreases in the nine states who utilized EDR in 2008 and whether they were considered swing states. In the attached chart comparing the EDR performances from 2008 vs. 2004, the data shows six of these states having only one percent growth or less, with three of them actually decreasing in voter turnout. In contrast, eight states in the top ten with increased voter turnout in 2008 were from states that do not have EDR! The research garnered from these states revealed that the increases in their voter turnout actually had more to do with them being swing states with competitive candidate races than whether or not they utilized EDR.

In summary, EDR may provide an initial boost that increases a state's voter participation but it hasn't yet proven to be a sure-fire way of keeping that interest. Having competitive races appears to be the better barometer of gauging voter participation. While EDR would do away with the problem of getting people to register after submitting their presidential ballots, the current relaxed requirements for proving citizenship at the time of registration begs the following question: How can we assure the legitimate electors of our state that their votes aren't being diluted by the votes of those whose eligibility may be in question? Without a longer period of time for registrars to investigate an election day registration by setting aside the ballot cast - much like the process currently allowed with provisional ballots - I am in agreement with many other registrars that current laws regarding registration in general should be strengthened first before any possible consideration of EDR is attempted.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter J. Gostin  
Registrar of Voters (R)  
New Britain

State	Turnout %	Turnout Rank 2008	Increase or Decrease Over 2004	EDR and /or Swing State
Minnesota	77.9	1	0.9	EDR; SS
Maine	73.0	2	-0.6	EDR
New Hampshire	71.7	4	1.0	EDR; SS
Iowa (2008)	69.7	5	-0.5	EDR; SS
Montana	67.2	13	4.4	EDR; SS
North Carolina (2008)	66.0	21	11.4	EDR*; SS
Wyoming	65.9	22	1.3	EDR; SS
North Dakota	65.5	23	0.4	EDR**
Idaho	63.2	27	-2.2	EDR
<b>Top 10 Voter Increases</b>				
North Carolina	66.0	1	11.4	EDR*; SS
South Carolina	58.8	2	11.0	Neither
Virginia	67.6	3	9.9	Neither
Alabama	61.8	4	7.9	Neither
Georgia	67.8	5	7.6	Neither
Nevada	59.4	6	6.9	Neither
Indiana	59.2	7	6.3	Neither
Rhode Island	62.7	8	6.0	Neither
Maryland	67.0	9	5.2	Neither
Montana	67.2	10	4.4	EDR; SS
Connecticut	67.1	18	2.9	None
USA	61.5			

SDR\* - Same Day Registration and Voting with 16 Day Early Voting Period

EDR\*\* - No Voter Registration

Source: Voter Turnout 2008: [www://nonprofitvote.org/voterturnout2008](http://www://nonprofitvote.org/voterturnout2008)