

Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

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2013 Legislative Committee

TESTIMONY
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2013

**HJ16, RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION
TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING
ELECTION ADMINISTRATION**

Good afternoon Senator Musto, Representative Jutila and the distinguished members of the GAE Committee. My name is Essie Labrot and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerks Association (CTCA). I am the legislative Vice Chair of the CTCA and the Town Clerk of West Hartford.

I am here today to testify in support of House Joint 16 A Resolution Approving and Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Increased Authority to the General Assembly regarding Election Administration.

Our Association is very much in favor of election reform that allows easier and less restrictive voting with a well thought out, cost effective, good sense plan that includes safeguards and minimizes disenfranchisement. We support the concept of early voting with the use of a tabulator. It utilizes equipment we already own, and reduces the need for the mail in ballots (or Absentee Ballots) that currently have an outdated, inefficient and manual process for mailing and counting.

Our Association has done extensive research on the mail in ballot process (Absentee Ballot) and in the last November election, found that there is a large number of absentee ballots not counted or arriving after election day – 5% on average statewide, with some towns reporting as high as 7 or 8%. The early voting option with a tabulator would eliminate this problem.

Due to the last two consecutive years of natural disasters around Election Day, we also recognize the need to allow for flexible emergency procedures. Allowing emergency workers to vote early – possibly by electronic means may be something to consider; as well as expanding caregivers the option for early voting. These extreme weather situations has also showed that relying on our Postal Service to deliver ballots (and have them returned before the end of election day) in a timely manner had many failings which is probably one of the reasons our offices received so many late ballots.

Our Association is very interested in being involved in future discussions regarding early voting options and efficient election administration. We are also in support of House Bill 5599 (Act Concerning Provisional Ballots), House Bill 5600 (Act Concerning Registrars of Voters) and House Bill 5601 (Recommendations on Technical Changes).

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be pleased to take any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Essie Labrot

Vice Chair, Legislative & Elections Committee, CT Town Clerks Association
Town/Council Clerk, West Hartford