



## State Of Connecticut

SENATE  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Senator Donald E. Williams, Jr.  
Senate President Pro Tempore

On

S.B. No. 4 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY VOTING

Committee on GAE

March 25, 2013

- We all heard about or experienced a number of issues surrounding problems at the polls during the 2012 election, whether it was confusion about where a citizen was supposed to vote, (only partially due to redistricting); extremely long lines; or communications workers being absent from their hometowns before, on and after Election Day performing storm cleanup operations after Hurricane Sandy.
- I believe it is time for Connecticut to join the other 35 states plus the District of Columbia which allowed early voting, no-excuse absentee voting or both for the November 2012 elections. (U.S. Government Accountability Office Report, GAO-01-90R, October 4, 2012).
- Senate Bill 4 creates a process for allowing Connecticut voters to cast their ballots in person in general elections for state legislators, Constitutional Officers, Congresspersons and U.S. Senators commencing the full week prior to the Monday before Election Day.
- The procedure would be up and running commencing with the 2014 general elections.
- Early voting would take place in a central location, such as a Town Hall or municipal polling place and would be available to voters during the normal business hours of that building.
- Elections Officials would be required to keep the polling place open until at least 8 pm on one of the early voting days and from 9 am to 5 pm on one weekend day.
- Voting procedures would be similar to those currently in place for Election Day voting:

- Elections officials would be selected and trained and certified as they are now;
  - Sufficient numbers of ballots for each voting precinct would be available;
  - The voter check-off and identification procedures would be identical;
  - During all hours of early voting, at least one election official will be on site.
- After the elector has voted, he or she will place the ballot in a secured ballot depository receptacle.
  - The secure receptacle containing the early voting ballots will be delivered to the location where absentee ballots are counted on Election Day and tallied in a similar fashion.
  - We are aware that Constitutional questions have been raised based on an 1862 case entitled *Opinion of the Judges of the Supreme Court as to Constitutionality of Soldiers' Voting Act*, 30 Conn. 591(1862) and a 2009 informal opinion letter of the former Attorney General.
  - We believe these concerns can be allayed by the protections and procedures prescribed in the bill:
    - As our Constitution requires, the ballots will be received by election officials, counted and declare in “open meeting.”
    - Unlike the Soldiers' Voting Act, the votes will be cast in the elector's town with a ballot prepared for his precinct.
    - The electors will retain all the traditional rights associated with voting (the right to observe, to challenge any vote, to see that votes are correctly counted, etc.).
    - Most importantly, the ballots would not be tallied until Election Day, thereby ensuring that the “final act of selection” of a candidate does not occur before Election Day.
  - We believe it is not inconsistent to proceed with the resolution proposing an amendment to the constitution simultaneous with the passage of this bill.