



# Written

## State of Connecticut

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### Testimony in Support of SB 778, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF POLLING PLACES FOR A PRIMARY

By Senator Toni Boucher

March 11, 2013

Chairman Musto, Chairman Jutila, Ranking Member McLachlan, Ranking Member Hwang, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, today I testify in support of SB 778, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF POLLING PLACES FOR A PRIMARY, and urge this committee to pass this bill. SB 778 would permit municipalities to use fewer polling places for primaries than for the general election.

The difference in turnout between general elections and primary elections is large and consistent. In the 2012 presidential election, 73.89% of Connecticut voters came out to cast their ballots. By contrast, the August 2012 primary saw only 22.3% of voters participate. Even wider disparities have been reported in recent years. Nevertheless, Connecticut municipalities are required to staff and maintain the same number of polling places for both for both primaries and general elections at a considerable cost to the taxpayers.

SB 778 would give our towns the ability to be flexible in planning for elections by allowing them to adjust the number of polling places based on expected turnout. The municipal savings that could be realized by eliminating polling locations are substantial. They include staffing costs, possible renting costs, the transportation of materials to each polling location, and the installation of phone lines for each polling location. Additionally, towns would find it easier to find a sufficient number of poll workers to properly maintain each polling location during low interest elections.

SB 778 makes much needed changes to our polling laws and if passed, will benefit our municipalities by enabling them to allocate funds more efficiently. During these difficult times, we need to extend the ability to cut costs to as many of our towns as possible. By allowing them to operate and pay for fewer polling places for lower turnout primaries, we will provide a small measure of financial relief that can be passed along to our residents.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak in favor of SB 778.