



City of New Britain

New Britain, Connecticut 06051
Office of the Mayor

*"New Britain:
A City for
All People"*

Testimony from New Britain Mayor Timothy O'Brien In Opposition to SB1146 AAC Cross-Endorsements

Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Election Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB1146, AAC Cross Endorsements.

I first want to thank this Committee for helping our state lead the nation in passing reforms that open government, increase choice, and reduce barriers for democratic participation.

As you may know, I served on the GAE Committee for several years as a State Representative prior to being elected Mayor of New Britain, including as its Vice-Chair. I have a deep appreciation for the importance of the work you all do and have done. Whether it's Connecticut's historic Campaign Finance Reform legislation, Ethics Reform or Election Day Registration – this committee has a rich history of restoring the public trust during challenging times and increasing voter participating in our political process.

Today I submit testimony in opposition to SB1146, AAC Cross-Endorsements. Taking the step to prohibit legitimate political parties from cross-endorsing candidates for public office undermines the principles this committee has for so long embraced.

SB1146 unnecessarily restricts not only the choice of political parties to endorse candidates but removes the choice of the voter to cast a ballot for the party and candidate of their choosing.

I am a Democrat, and I am proud to be a Democrat. I run as a Democrat because I believe in my party and my party's principles. But allowing the choice of voters to also vote for candidates on party lines other than the candidates' own parties is about preserving the right of voters to cast their ballots as they choose.

The election laws on parties and ballot access should be about recognizing the parties that the voters, themselves, choose to give legitimacy, and it is important to avoid shaping the election laws so as to substitute the judgment of the legislature for the opinions of the voters. If the voters succeed in organizing a legitimate party fitting their own values, they should be free to nominate the candidates of their choice, and they should not be legally barred from nominating someone who also happens to be the candidate of the different party.

I urge the committee to oppose SB1146 and any attempts to prohibit or reduce the freedom of the electorate to choose.

Thank you for taking the time.

Mayor Tim O'Brien

Written
3/25/13