



DENISE W. MERRILL
SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

TO: Senator Eric Coleman, Co-Chair of Judiciary Committee
Representative Gerry Fox, Co-Chair of Judiciary Committee
All Members of Judiciary Committee

FROM: Denise Merrill, Secretary of the State

DATE: April 1, 2013

RE: Written Testimony regarding H.B. 6679

Thank you for hearing H.B. 6679 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COUNTING OF INCARCERATED PERSONS FOR PURPOSES OF DETERMINING LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS AND DISTRIBUTING STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS.

The bill provides for incarcerated persons to be counted for the census as still residing in their town of last residence, as opposed to the town in which their correctional facility is located. The bill also assigns the Office of Secretary of the State the responsibility of collecting, analyzing and manipulating the census data for the purpose of redistricting. This is a much more significant role than the Office of the Secretary of the State currently plays in the redistricting process.

Connecticut's redistricting process is done by a bi-partisan commission jointly appointed by the Governor and each legislative caucus. The underlying data that is used for that process is generated by the local Registrars and Clerks, and collected by the Secretary of the State. The Secretary's office then provides it to the non-partisan Office of Legislative Research, which then manages the data and supplies it to the redistricting commission. As you can see, the Secretary's office does not manipulate individual records or data sets in this process. In fact, the office does not even own the software that would be required to open the census shape files.

The underlying issue of what community should be able to count an incarcerated person is one that this agency has no objection to. But we think that the most efficient and cost effective approach would be to assign this to the Office of Legislative Research.

Thank you for your consideration.