



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE MELISSA ZIOBRON
THIRTY-FOURTH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING, ROOM 4200
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1423
CAPITOL: (860) 240-8700
FAX: (860) 240-0207
Melissa.Ziobron@housegop.ct.gov

Government Administration and Elections Committee Public Testimony Monday, March 3, 2014

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 274 AN ACT CONCERNING CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES

Dear Senator Musto, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Hwang and esteemed members of the Committee,

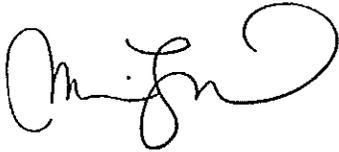
I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 274, which aims to eliminate the additional signature requirements for minor party candidates as part of the certification of nominations process.

I represent a diverse political community. One town, East Hampton has been the home to an active minor party called the Chatham Party. This past November, 16 members of the Chatham Party who were candidates for municipal office were thrown off the ballot due to the current wording of statute. The candidates turned in the same paperwork which they have done many times before, only this time someone had realized the nuance of the language regarding the disparity between major and minor parties. The issue was brought forward after the deadline for certification and prevented their ballot access. It had been mistakenly overlooked by dozens of Town Clerks across the state and affected many municipal elections in a negative way. They were forced to bring the matter to court and prevailed only weeks before Election Day.

Another town I represent, Colchester has a growing minor party, the Colchester Independent Party. In East Haddam, there is ongoing discussion among members of a major party to begin a minor party there. As an enrolled member of a major party, I believe the current wording in statute is unfair and frankly flies in the face of democracy. While I may not agree with the tenets of the Chatham Party or other minor party platforms, I do believe strongly in their ability to be part of the democratic process in a fair and equitable way. This bill would change that wording and would allow minor parties to be on an even playing field with major parties.

In a time where we have declining civic participation and voter malaise, we should be doing more to allow more voices into the process, not less. SB 274 is desperately needed and would allow minor parties across the state to be treated fairly and would send the message that all voices are welcome in our democracy.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Ziobron". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Melissa Ziobron
State Representative
34th District