



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE  
Public Hearing March 9, 2015

Testimony on Raised Bill HB 6950

**An Act Concerning Reforms to Election Administration.**

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen. I am Chairman of the ROVAC Legislative Committee and here to speak in support of HB 6950. ROVAC has been before this committee many times in support of the changes proposed in this bill. We believe HB 6950 is a solution bill that needs to be considered seriously in order to correct some of the issues Registrars of Voters face every day. We thank the GAE Committee for hearing our concerns and our solutions reflected in this bill.

The November 2014 election brought to light the issues ROVAC has testified about concerning the "unknown" vote where a voter fills in the oval for the same candidate endorsed by two or more parties. Instead of having the voter spoil the first ballot and redoing the ballot, the tabulator counts one vote with no party designation. The Registrars of Voters must allocate the "unknown" vote based on the % of the party designation. For municipalities with 20 or more polling locations it means 100s of calculations per candidate. The calculation is mandated to be done by district for the polling locations, absentee ballots and Election Day registration. There is no way a Head Moderator can report the results in a timely manner. The Secretary of the State's office is looking for results, the candidates are looking for results but by 12:00 am. they are still calculating. The Registrars of Voters have been in the office since around 4:00 am. Election morning. We are frustrated along with everyone else. The process of changing to an overvote, will not be disenfranchise votes as long as there is an option if the voter cannot recast the ballot. The very least that should be done is the unknown vote remains undesignated. Therefore, the Registrars of Voters are not determining voter intent and the election results will be reported earlier.

Election reporting should be upgraded. Newspaper reporters quote that we use the pony express to deliver election results. Using State Troopers has become outdated yet still in statute. The State Troopers would better serve the public by not being responsible for delivering election results. The way to do this is simple, more technology. ROVAC

endorses the use of technology such as email with fillable head moderator returns. There is no excuse for using PDF files to be downloaded and manually filled in to be faxed to SOTS. Fax is outdated and no longer available as it was many years ago.

By removing the "manual" from the audit procedure, it allows technology to take over the process. The current manual audit is costly, time consuming and prone to human error. Registrars have been waiting for several years for the new electronic audit machine to become available. As ROVAC has said many times, technology is an important component for the future of Elections and we embrace the changes. Removing manual from the statutes becomes the first step to allowing automation.

Education for Registrars of Voters is the other component for stronger elections as advocated by ROVAC. Currently, the education piece happens at the ROVAC conferences held in the Spring and Fall. We realize this is not enough. Current statute calls for a committee to develop the program. We are ready for more. A certification program similar to the Town Clerks and Town Assessors programs is near completion. We believe in the consistency that a certification program would provide. We also believe this will go a long way to eliminating SEEC complaints.

In most cases, 16 and 17 year olds can work on Election Day in various capacities. We believe ballot clerks were left out as an oversight. Ballot Clerks did not exist until the tabulators became the method of voting and ROVAC feels it is the time to correct this.

With online voter registration, SOTS through DMV have made it easier to register to vote. The registration process is quicker and less prone to error because it is computer generated vs hand written. The mandatory Saturday of the third week before an election has become obsolete. The number of people showing up at the Registrars of Voters offices has diminished and therefore not necessary.

We want to thank the members of GAE for listening to us as we proposed solutions to some of the issues facing Registrars of Voters. We support this bill and are sure if implemented will make a big difference in elections.

Thank you for allowing this testimony.

Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters South Windsor  
ROVAC Legislative Chair