

GAE Committee

Hearing on Sen. Bill 1051 An Act Strengthening Connecticut's Elections.

Testimony of Kathryn S. Hale, Esq., 54 Orchard Hill Drive, South Windsor, CT

My Background: I am an attorney in private practice.

I have volunteered with the Secretary of the State's office on Election Day on several occasions, and observed some of the problems in other towns and in other states.

I am testifying for myself as a citizen of Connecticut.

I have no financial stake in the outcome of this bill because I am not a Registrar.

I am a Certified Election Moderator, having taken training and passed a test.

I have spent thousands of volunteer hours in election protection and citizenship education over two decades. I have even volunteered as an election protection observer in Florida.

I am:

1. OPPOSED TO Eliminating checks and balances by consolidating power in a single Registrar.
2. OPPOSED TO APPOINTMENT OF REGISTRARS BY THE ELECTED BODY (Town Council's, Boards of Selectman). This appointment system will lead to a MORE POLITICAL system rather than less.

In town's where there is one-party dominance, that party will have sole control over elections by appointing the sole Registrar.

In towns with split or alternating party control the appointment of a Registrar will itself become a highly politicized appointment.

Appointment of Registrars will turn that office into a political patronage position. Election of Registrars by caucus as in South Windsor is direct democracy.

#### REASONS FOR OPPOSITION TO ONE-REGISTRAR SYSTEM.

1. ELIMINATING THE TWO-REGISTRAR SYSTEM WILL WEAKEN OUR DEMOCRACY by making the Registrars function MORE subject to political influence. The reason that South Windsor has few election problems is that the two Registrars (and all the people who work under them) watch each other like hawks to make sure that everything is done by the books. The checks and balances system is the fundamental mechanism of our democracy.
2. Appointment of a single Registrar will not save costs to towns, as one full-time employee always costs more than two part-time, due to the high costs of benefits.
3. Running an election is very complex and requires many pieces to fit into one puzzle. More eyes generally means better results.

I am IN FAVOR of:

1. Additional training and Certification for Registrars. (Moderators, who work under the Registrars have to take training and pass a test. This should be required for Registrars as well)
2. Additional authority in the Secretary of the State's office to enforce proper election procedures, both by mandating procedures before election day and sanctioning non-performance.