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Greetings!

To Mr. Chairmen and Committee members – thank you for having these hearings on this very important topic.

**I am hear to support Rep Ritter's bill Raised Bill 1051 An Act  
Strengthening Connecticut's Elections.**

I had a dream last night that I was running for Mayor and we were hand counting the ballots – It was a nightmare – just like it has been in Hartford for the last few years.

My name is Leslie Hammond and I live in downtown Hartford. I also have my business in Hartford – I am the owner and broker of Hammond Realty.

I bought my condo at the Linden almost 4 years ago and I know we have had major problems in our Registrars office since that time. This past year was the worse yet – as you might know a number of the polls were not open on time and a judge had to rule to let 2 polling places stay open later. We already have a very low turn out of voters and this gave people another chance to be cynical and not trust the system.

I saw the movie Selma and with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Voting Rights Bill and the anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma I felt called to be part of the solution.

It is obvious to me that the system is broken – how we have 3 registrars (with big salaries) in Hartford that don't have the skills or knowledge to handle elections is beyond me - but we do and it is not working. Today our City Council is voting to fire the registrars since they have not been doing their job – and then of course they will fight the city legally and a lot of time and money will be spent at a time that we need to focus on so many other major problems in our city like budget and jobs.

I am grateful to Rep Ritter for sponsoring this bill and feel it is a by partisan solution for all towns. . It is the only way we can possibly get back on track in Hartford . He has thought it through so all parties should be able to agree on it. Brilliant.

In 2013 we had a 5% voter turn out – so distressing. And in 2014 it was 31% but who knows how many votes didn't get counted. We may not be quite as bad as Selma in the 1960's but sometimes it feels that way. There is so much apathy and cynicism among voters in Hartford partly due to this inept system. Please vote yes for this bill to move forward and inspire confidence again in our system.

I want to thank Kim Hynes from Common Cause for helping me navigate this hearing process – I couldn't have done it without her.