

Testimony of

Austin Tanner

Former First Selectman of Brooklyn, CT

Members of the Joint Committee on Government Administration and Elections, my name is Austin Tanner, I am from Brooklyn, CT and am a former First Selectman from that town. I am here, today, to testify on **BILL 5388, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE IN THE TOWN OF BROOKLYN**, a bill to eliminate the requirement that the six member Brooklyn Town School Committee be comprised of three members from each of the two major parties.

As presented, this bill would strike language that three from each major political party shall comprise the six member board.

As Brooklyn has been operating under this 1931 act, each party nominates three members bi-annually and six are elected so there is no true election, as the whole process is done by town committee caucuses.

There are several issues I would like to be addressed:

1. The issue in this bill is to allow minority representation as described in State Statute 9-167A.
2. The issue of staggered terms so the entire School Committee is not up for election every two years.
3. The issue that more people need to be nominated than possibly elected so there is a true choice of the electorate.

H B 05388 addresses the issue of minority rule and would also allow nominations of as many positions, by each party, as are open at each election. By striking the previous phrase in front of the proposed strike, it would also allow term staggering as allowed in State Statute 9-206.

The only other issue to be addressed is the length of term, in which State Statute 9-206 determines to be a six year term. Brooklyn elects School Committee members for two year terms. State Statute 9-206 also states that, by ordinance, a town may establish a different method of rotation and length of term. Therefor this can be handled at the town level.

In summary, I would like to urge passage of the proposed deletion. I would also urge deletion of the entire section related to the Board of Education being governed by Special Act. This would allow the Town of Brooklyn to have a true election of our School Committee and allow us to make any further adjustments, the town feels appropriate, by Town Ordinance.

Thank you.