



***GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION &
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE***

March 14, 2016

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 96% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

HB 5611 “An Act Concerning Notices for Elections, Primaries, and Referenda and the Holding of Public Hearings Prior to the Determination of Polling Places by Municipal Legislative Bodies”

HB 5611, as drafted, is an unnecessary unfunded state mandate.

The bill would, among other things, invalidate certain elections if not properly noticed in accordance with statute, and require that, if a municipal legislative body is to alter the location of any polling place, the legislative body will hold public hearing and place a notice regarding the public hearing in a newspaper.

Currently, local officials ensure that elections are conducted properly and with proper notice to the public. CCM is concerned that HB 5611 additional requirements that are unnecessary and would impose an undue burden and mandate on municipalities.

In addition, the bill contains ambiguities and contradictions that may make it difficult to implement. In particular, section 7 of the bill conflicts with the sentence which precedes it. That sentence uses the phrase “as nearly as may be” and then the new sentence says “in exact accordance with.” It may not be possible for referenda to be conducted “in exact accordance with” the statutes governing election.

In addition, section 8 provides that the legislative body of the town must hold a hearing before selecting a polling place. Currently, the registrars don't have to hold a public hearing they can't agree on a location. If this is the case, the provision would only be implemented at the last minute when it might not be possible to meet the hearing notice requirements proposed.

CCM asks the Committee to **take no action** HB 5611.

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If you have any questions, please contact Mike Muszynski, Advocacy Manager of CCM, at mmuszynski@ccm-ct.org or (203) 500-7556.