



**GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING March 14, 2016**

Testimony in opposition to 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

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, and members of the GAE committee, my name is Sue W. Larsen, and I am a Registrar of Voters in South Windsor and the Legislative Committee Chairman for ROVAC. I am here today to oppose HB 5611.

I firmly believe that polling locations should not be a political football. Registrars of Voters are experienced in State Statutes relating to polling locations. We are trained to look for locations that allow for ALL voters to have the experience of voting in person. The municipal legislative bodies are not experienced in this area and certainly not most of the people in the municipalities.

While public hearings can give the municipal legislative body an impression of what the public is looking for, this is not going to give them anything more than it is a convenient location or create a fear of the location. An example of this is the use of public schools as a voting location. The President's Task Force on Presidential elections recommends the use of schools as polling locations and working with the Boards of Education to close schools on Election Day. This has worked well in many towns across the state. However, every 4 years we deal with the Presidential Preference Primary and for some reason, time is now allowed to schedule a professional development day. Registrars deal with schools buses and after school activities.

Remember, currently the law states that the location of the Primary is the location of the Election unless an emergency is declared that the location is unfit for the election. This means by changing the location due to the schools being in session, the Presidential Election will be held at the new location leading to voter confusion and additional costs associated with notification of the new location.

The bottom line is that Registrars of Voters usually work well together to determine polling locations with care and a deep sense of responsibility to the voter. Thank you for your consideration and I am available for any questions you may have.