



**GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

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 give an overview of ROVAC's position on several bills. Members of the Legislative Committee have submitted more detailed written testimony on a variety of bills, for your reference.

ROVAC supports the following bills:

SB 250 An Act Concerning Hours of Election Day Registration

ROVAC is anticipating a large turnout for EDR this Presidential Election. The current adaptation of EDR is that only those having completed the registration process at 8:00 pm are allowed to vote. Those in line for hours and cannot get to the registration process through no fault of their own. They are truly disenfranchised and ROVAC is attempting to be proactive in finding ways to allow those potential voters an opportunity. We do not believe they should be treated differently than those voting a presidential ballot.

SB 251 An Act Concerning Reporting of Municipal Results

ROVAC strives for consistency in election law. Having two reporting styles leads to unnecessary confusion about what is reported and in what timeframe. The bottom line is that most people and candidates want to know who won. The statistics are useful afterwards when analysis begins. We believe this was meant to happen in last year's bill and hope it will be approved this year.

HB 5386 An Concerning Votes for Cross Endorsed Candidates

This has continued to be an issue for Registrars of Voters. We are mandated to determine a party designation for the voter. Confusion by the voters as to how they are voting and how many times are still issues to be dealt with. To alleviate one issue, we could change the word unknown to unassigned. The candidate will receive one vote, but it would be unassigned to a political party.

HB 5390 An Act Concerning Written Instructions and Opinions From the Secretary of the State

An online information section on the Secretary of the State's website is critical for consistency and transparency. There should be one site for general statutes, regulations, opinions and directives. This should be supported by ROVAC and SOTS as a long term cost savings for both parties. Research could be done by the Registrars of Voters and SOTS office could spend more time doing other tasks than responding to the same questions and emails from Registrars.

HB 5392 An Act Concerning Training by the Secretary of the State Regarding Motor Vehicle Licenses

Training is essential to insuring that all Registrars of Voters are consistent in their approach to elections, primaries and referenda. Training on licenses may not take a long to complete, but it is extremely important that there is no confusion on the type of driver's license presented as identification.

HB 5393 An Act Concerning Election Administration

Online voter registration system deadlines should be consistent with the other registration deadlines. We believe that many potential voters would use the system prior to Election Day if it was available but as of today, the system is shut down one week earlier than in person or by mail registration. These people could end up in the EDR line.

ROVAC has some concerns with the following bills:

HB 5391 An Act Concerning the Handling of Voter Affidavits

ROVAC does not support this bill as written. Currently, provisional ballots are used in State and Federal elections and primaries. A provisional ballot is used for an individual that is not on the voter list but is convinced they should be. They fill out the ballot and the Registrars of Voters have six days to determine whether or not to count the ballot. There are no provisional ballots in municipal elections, primaries and referenda. This bill proposes to use provisional ballots in elections that the ballot was not intended for. Another reason for not supporting this bill is the understanding of the voter that uses FORM 3 (Affidavit). While there are voters that disagree that they need to show ID, most of the voters are people that rush into the polls with children, those that don't normally carry a purse or wallet during activities like running. These are registered voters and most of them known to the poll workers. They willingly sign Form 3 and are willing to face any fines because they are who they say they are. There is no need for registered voters on the official voter list to fill out a provisional ballot that will be counted after the election.

A possible change to this bill that could make this work is through the asterisk (*) on the official voter list. Currently a voter with an asterisk means that the Registrars were not able to verify their identification. An example would be a mail in registration card and the driver's license number was transposed. The voter receives a letter stating that an ID is required the first time they vote. This is for federal elections. For municipal elections, the voter comes in and can sign a Form 3 and never show an id. Once the voter has voted once the asterisk is removed no matter if it is a municipal election, primary or referendum. ROVAC would support that the asterisk apply to all election. Consistency!

HB 255 An Act Concerning the Applicability and Provision of Training for Registrar of Voters

ROVAC supports all bills that encourage the education and training of Registrars of Voters. We have a couple of issues with that bill that we feel will make it stronger. Currently there is confusion about how many hours of education is required. With certification, we have eight sessions for certification and eight hours continuing education. In 9-192b, there is an additional 10 hours which was in law prior to the certification. We would like to have 9-192b eliminated.

ROVAC would also like to be included in the development of training along with other designated parties. There are other areas of elections that Registrars would benefit from.

HB 252 An Act Concerning Post Election Audit Integrity and Efficiency

First and foremost, the audit was developed to audit the tabulators. This bill attempts to turn it into a recanvass. It adds costs to the audit by adding moderator returns on the Secretary of the State website, adding absentee ballots and EDR ballots to the mix, new containers for the ballots. ROVAC does support the 5% instead of the 10% of the districts selected for audit. The tabulators have been tested for nearly 10 years.

Thank you so much for allowing me to testify today. The ROVAC Legislative Committee is available to answer any further questions. We continue to work for consistency and transparency in election law, and appreciate this committee's support in achieving this.