

February 26, 2016

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan and Representative Smith:

Thank you for allowing us to supply testify in support of SB 253 which we would support as is **or** with the voter cap that was put forth in the Proposed Bill Request form sent in by Representative Wood on February 4, 2016 (this Bill Request limited the consolidation to towns with fewer than 15,000 voters).

We are the Registrars for the town of Darien, which has approximately 12,400 registered voters, broken down into six voting districts. Town-wide approximately 2,300 voters are registered as Democrats and 5,800 as Republicans.

We would like the ability to consolidate all six of our polls when holding a primary election, provided that both Registrars agree to the consolidation and provided there is ample notification to the community and the parties.

The following data represents the turnout statistics at primaries in Darien for the years 1970-2015:

Type of Election	Average Turnout	High Turnout	Low Turnout
Republican Presidential Primary	34.0%	54.8%	11.5%
Democratic Presidential Primary	39.3%	62.8%	23.5%
Republican Federal Primary	30.4%	52.3%	17.5%
Democratic Federal Primary	15.2%	30.9%	5.0%
Republican Municipal Primary	38.0%	55.0%	20.3%
Democratic Municipal Primary	36.3%	36.3%	36.3%

Given that 1/3 of the Town is registered as Unaffiliated, the total number of voters we process at a primary election is considerably reduced from a regular election and not a problem to facilitate within the range of turn-outs historically encountered in Darien. The town already has the ability to run a centralized referendum.

Centralized Primaries would allow us to hold the elections under more carefully monitored voting conditions (the Registrars would be in the centralized poll for the entire election) and at a reduced cost to the town. The reduction in staffing would help us in our efforts to staff the election—for instance it is often problematic to find staff in the April or summer vacation periods.

It is often difficult to generate a certain excitement at the poll when there is low turn-out and the centralized voting would provide greater voter/elector “energy” in the poll location. In Darien, the drive to the central poll would be less than four miles for all voters.

Politicians wishing to campaign at the polls will be able to have a much greater presence with all of the voters using this centralized poll.

In a recent Fairfield County Registrar of Voters survey, approximately 70% of the registrars were in favor of this legislation.

Again, we hope you will consider and support that proposed legislation. Please feel free to ask us for additional materials if we can be of any help.

Regards, John Visi – Republican Registrar and Kathy Hammell—Democratic Registrar
Town of Darien – Town Hall – 2 Renshaw Road