



Testimony of Eric Gjede
Counsel, CBIA
Before the Committee on Government Administration & Elections
February 26, 2018

**Testifying in opposition to HB 5173
AN ACT PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF VOTERS**

Good afternoon Senator McLachlan, Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Representative Devlin and members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee. My name is Eric Gjede and I am counsel at the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which represents thousands of large and small companies throughout the state of Connecticut.

I am here today to oppose HB 5173.

I appreciate some of the voter privacy concerns this bill attempts to address. That being said, there are equal if not greater dangers in denying the public access to voter registration information. In drafting this legislation, the committee recognized the importance of allowing access to this information to government employees and to the public for purposes related to a primary, election or referendum. However, this information also may be needed by the public for, among other things, grassroots issue advocacy.

While privacy is always important to consider, allowing individuals access to voter registration information, with all due respect, is to help protect the public from policymakers. Individuals or organizations that disagree with state policies should be allowed to make their case to Connecticut's citizens using the same voter information as the lawmakers and government officials that created the policies in the first place.

I urge the committee to take no action on HB 5173.