



**Testimony of Emily O'Hara, New Voter Project Coordinator  
Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG)**

**in support of**

**HB 5818, AN ACT EXTENDING THE HOURS OF ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION**

**&**

**HB 6045, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION DAY AND PRIMARY DAY REGISTRATION**

Chairperson Flexer, Chairperson Fox, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today in support of **HB 5818, AN ACT EXTENDING THE HOURS OF ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION** and **HB 6045, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION DAY AND PRIMARY DAY REGISTRATION**. My name is Emily O'Hara and I'm from Litchfield, Connecticut. I am currently a junior at UConn and the New Voter Project Coordinator for UConnPIRG.

Since 1972, ConnPIRG has worked to give students the skills and opportunity to practice effective citizenship. Both on campus and out in the world, we mobilize students to investigate big social problems, come up with practical solutions, convince the media and public to pay attention, and get decision-makers to act.

A functioning democracy depends on the participation of its citizens. Every American – Democrat, Republican, or independent – has a fundamental right to have their vote counted. Step one to participation in elections is registering to vote. In an effort to expand participation, ConnPIRG regularly runs voter registration drives at the University of Connecticut and other campuses where students express an interest.

The experience at UConn this past November highlights the challenges of student voter participation. While we organized buses to transport students from campus to the community center election site, long lines for the buses and again at the polling place certainly discouraged some from making the trip. Once there, there was concern from some that they wouldn't be allowed to vote. It is critical for all those students who did make the trip, that we must be sure they have the opportunity to vote. We are proud of the high turnout in this past election, but intend to do all we can do to make sure every student who wishes to vote has that opportunity.

Again, ConnPIRG strongly supports these proposals and looks forward to working with the Committee throughout the session. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.