

H.B.7392 Oppose

Government Administration and Elections Committee Testimony – March 25, 2019

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Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a Certified Moderator, and a Computer Scientist. I have worked in and led polling places at least eight times, led Election Day Registration twice, and led the central counting of absentee ballots five times.

This bill would limit to voter information to registrars, the Secretary of the State, candidates, and political operatives “Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes”.

Although well-intended there are significant consequences of this change. Whenever one undertakes changing existing election law, especially weakening an aspect of it, one must thoroughly understand why the current practice is in law.

At best, it is a very poor public policy idea, undermining public confidence in our elections and our democracy:

There are reasons why voter registration lists and history are public records.

- So that voters can determine if they are properly registered and recorded as voting or not voting.
- So that citizens and citizen groups¹ can determine if there was fraudulent or double voting in elections e.g. by checking if diseased voters are on the list and checkedoff, by checking if voters have voted in multiple towns, or are listed under the correct addresses etc.

This law only allows access by a limited group of insiders. It can only lead to added distrust in our elections².

Tragically ironic, this law only prevents the commercial use of such lists. It does not preclude their disclosure and use for fraud, or for the possibly legal undermining confidence in our elections.

At the very worst this bill would preclude any election official or other official except registrars and the Secretary of the State from receiving voter information.

“Notwithstanding any provision of the general statutes” would preclude:

- Anyone in the clerk’s office from issuing absentee ballots or logging them back in.
- Anyone in the registrars’ office assisting in voter registration and using the Central Voter Registration System.
- Anyone in polling places or central absentee vote counting locations using or receiving voter registration lists, including checking of voters.
- Anyone in EDR locations using the Central Voter Registration Systems except registrars.
- The Secretary of the State continuing to participate in the ERIC interstate cross-check system, or disclosing our voter registration data to any other state.
- Information systems employees or vendors to look at any data associated with the Centralized Voter Registration System.
- Anyone from the SEEC from reviewing voter registration data in pursuit of fraud investigations.

(Tragically ironic, this law allows the lists to be available to unofficial checkers, but not official checkers.)

A Reasonable Alternative:

As proposed by the Secretary of the State in 2018, leave existing law alone, except in delivering lists under FOI requests: Redact the day of birth and month of birth, leaving the year of birth.

Thank you

¹ E.g.: In 2010 the Connecticut Citizen Election Audit in conjunction with the Connecticut Post conducted a “Citizen Audit” of the race of Governor. In addition to uncovering some 1,500 votes that have yet to be officially counted, the audit recounted all the pollbooks and found significant inaccurate voter counts recorded in moderators returns, in some districts scores of more voters checkedoff than ballots, and in other districts scores of more voted ballots than voters checkedoff, see:

<http://www.ctelectionaudit.org/BridgeportRecount/BridgeportRecountReportDec2010.pdf>

² At the mid-March 2019 Election Verification Network conference in Washington D.C., panelists from U.S. Homeland Security stated that they believe Russia interference in the 2016 election and more so in 2020 election are not change results but to sew distrust in our election system and our democracy. This bill would legally facilitate those Russian efforts.