

**TESTIMONY OF TOM SWAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP (CCAG)**

**MARCH 13, 2019**

**BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

**ON**

**S.B.1042 AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL OF STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT  
COMMISSION COMPLAINTS**

**S.B. 1043 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION AND  
REGULATION OF DARK MONEY**

**H.B. 7329 AN ACT CONCERNING DARK MONEY AND DISCLOSURE OF FOREIGN POLITICAL SPENDING  
AND OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**S.B. 1045 AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND FILING OF CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE STATEMENTS**

**H.J. 161 RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR  
EARLY VOTING AND NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING**

**S.B. 1036 AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALISM FOR ELECTIONS**

**H.B. 6059 AN ACT CONCERNING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES TO ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and other members of the Committee my name is Tom Swan and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. On behalf of our thousands of members statewide I want to thank you for raising various proposals today to strengthen our democracy.

CCAG supports S.B. 1042 AN ACT CONCERNING THE AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL OF STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION COMPLAINTS, but would prefer an actual repeal of the 2017 law. The arbitrary timeline of one year in the 2017 law made no sense from an accountability perspective and encourages violations of election law.

CCAG supports S.B. 1043 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION AND REGULATION OF DARK MONEY and H.B. 7329 AN ACT CONCERNING DARK MONEY AND DISCLOSURE OF FOREIGN POLITICAL SPENDING AND OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING ON SOCIAL MEDIA. They are similar to an earlier bill you have heard and we would like to have our testimony from February 22<sup>nd</sup> on [SB 914](#) be considered here to save time. We believe that this is a very real issue and appreciate your taking it so seriously.

We also support S.B. 1045 AN ACT CONCERNING ONLINE POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND FILING OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE STATEMENTS. The frustration of candidates and their Treasurers was very intense in 2018 due to the difficulties of getting their applications approved in a timely manner. In the pressure of a campaign this can be extremely frustrating and therefore damaging to the program.

While discussing on line activity and the CEP, we want to raise our concerns with SEEC's opinion pertaining to on line membership organizations and limiting their and their members rights of association. These groups should be able to engage their members in political activities and endorse candidates in CT. If SEEC doesn't revise their declaration, we would advise the legislature to consider action here.

We support H.J. 161 RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING AND NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING. The current restrictions in our Constitution do not reflect the realities of todays voters. With so many people commuting for work, having on call scheduling for work, and facing uncertainty regarding family obligations make the current rules unworkable for too many of Connecticut voting eligible residents.

Thirty-nine states already have early voting and the legislature would be able to define how these changes are implemented. We do not see any reason to oppose giving the voters an opportunity to vote on this and hope that there is enough bipartisan support to get the question on the ballot at the earliest possible date.

We believe the proposed study that is proposed in S.B. 1036 AN ACT CONCERNING REGIONALISM FOR ELECTIONS makes total sense. If done right, this can save municipalities money and improve election administration. We think this bill is a good way to figure out how to accomplish these goals.

The proposal to allow municipalities H.B. 6059 AN ACT CONCERNING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES TO ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION is a smart response to the problems some municipalities had in administering election day registrations in 2018. It allows municipalities to design an appropriate election day registration system.

Thank you for your consideration.