

**Government Administration and Elections Committee  
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** HB-7160

**Title:** AN ACT INCREASING VOTER ACCESS.

**Vote Date:** 4/1/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/25/2019

**File No.:**

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**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Government Administration and Elections Committee

**Co-Sponsors**

Rep. Joe Aresimowicz, 30th Dist.

Rep. Matthew Ritter, 1st Dist.

Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.

Sen. Bob Duff, 25th Dist.

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill was created to help enhance and streamline new methods of increasing voter access. As well as create a process to adjust U.S. Census population data to count inmates at their addresses prior to incarceration instead of at the prison address

**Substitute Language LCO No.6785-** The proposed substitute language for this bill is contained within line 187 of LCO 6785 where “Upon admission of the applicant” has been removed. Additionally, in line 459 of LCO 6785, there was substitute language which stated: “Such electronic system may include a means by which an applicant’s signature, on file with said commissioner, may be transmitted to the Secretary.”

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Ned Lamont, Governor of Connecticut:** Supports this bill along with smart reforms proposed by the Secretary of the State, will help increase participation in our democracy, increase the use of technology to improved and streamline voter registration opportunities, modernize election operations to make the election process more effective and move efficient, and make it easier for state agencies to comply with federal law.

**Denise W. Merrill, Secretary of the State:** Governor Lamont's proposals related to making voter registration and voting more accessible to eligible voters contains many of the same proposals that I have testified in favor of recently.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**David McGuire, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut(ACLU-CT):** The ACLU-CT strongly supports a fair voting system to uphold the foundational cornerstone of our democracy: the right to vote. We therefore support the measures in House Bill 7160 and Senate Bill 24, which would provide more people with the opportunity to participate in elections in Connecticut. The bill would make Election Day a holiday. Designating Election Day as a state holiday would improve voter turnout. If Connecticut recognized Election Day as a state holiday, thousands of state employees would have the day off of work. This would allow them more time to travel to their polling locations and vote. Private employers would also be more likely to give employees the day off if it was recognized as a state holiday, further increasing voter turnout.

**Tom Swan, Director, Connecticut Citizen Action Group:** The Governor's proposal to make Election Day a holiday is a very good idea to make clear the importance of voting and encouraging people to participate. We applaud that the Governor is looking to increase registration at agencies beyond Department of Motor Vehicles, which was a great success in 2018. We encourage the adoption a back-end registration that will save money and increase citizen participation.

#### **Also in Support:**

- **Aleks Kajstura, Legal Director, Prison Policy Initiative**
- Yvonne Senturia, Election Law Specialist, League of Women Voters of Connecticut

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Anne Manusky, First Vice President, Connecticut Republican Assembly:** I am opposed to changes to the current voter laws of the state of CT which would weaken voting protocols currently in place; I oppose changes in registration and voting that would weaken voting and elections process.

**Sue W. Larsen, President, Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (ROVAC):** That is a Band-Aid and not a solution. ROVAC suggests a town have the option for additional locations for EDR. This could allow students to walk to an EDR location between or after classes. They will no longer have to wait for a bus, ride the bus, get to the EDR with 30 or more other students, wait in line with the other students and then wait for the transportation back to the university or college.

**Reported by: Nicholas Rogers  
Committee Clerk**

**Date: 4/16/19**