

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

Bill No.: SB-479

Title: AN ACT DESIGNATING ELECTION DAY AS A STATE HOLIDAY.

Vote Date: 3/6/2019

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/15/2019

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Co-Sponsors

Sen. Marilyn V. Moore, 22nd Dist.

Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.

Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist.

Rep. Quentin W. Phipps, 100th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would add the Tuesday after the First Monday in November (known as Election Day) as legal state holiday.

Substitute Language LCO No. 5548- Sets out the order of the state holidays chronologically

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Denise W. Merrill, Secretary of the State: This bill, along with several other proposals that have been made, would make Election Day a state holiday in Connecticut, as it is in several other states. The best example of this is probably Puerto Rico, where Election Day is a holiday, is treated as a celebration, and voter turnout is very high. This would make voting more convenient and could increase voter turnout.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Senator Marilyn Moore: Recommended exchanging existing Lincolns Birthday holiday for Election Day.

David McGuire, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut

(ACLU-CT): Making Election Day a state holiday would be good for Connecticut. Thousands

of state employees would be able to take and make their way to their polling stations. Private employers would be more likely to give employees off, which would increase voter turnout.

Tom Swan, Executive Director, The Connecticut Citizen Action Group(CCAG):

Making Election Day a state holiday will make it easier for people to vote, and to elevate the importance of voting as it serves as great counter point to voter suppression.

Sean Foley, Yale Law School Student: This bill would promote the importance of voting by clearly demarcating one day annually as an occasion for participating in democratic self-governance. Importantly, Governor Lamont has endorsed the idea of making Election Day a state holiday because his administration wants to encourage maximum participation by all eligible voters in Connecticut. This idea also has broad bipartisan support. According to a Pew poll about making Election Day a *national* holiday, 71% of Democrats and 59% of Republicans support the

Also in support:

- Cheri Quickmire, Common Cause
- Arvia Walker, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
- Michelle Kenefick, National Association of Social Workers

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Luther Weeks, CT Voters Count: Stated it was not clear this bill would achieve desired effect since most businesses would likely remain open. He suggested mandating the closing of all public schools since many used as polling places. The same holiday requirements should apply statewide primaries and presidential primaries. They are concerned that many government employees and private business workers are needed to support elections- they and all those that support them must be exempt from the holiday.

Reported by: Nick Rogers

Date: 3/11/19

Committee Clerk