Bill No.: HB-7321
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS AND SECURITY.
Vote Date: 3/29/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 3/13/2019
File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This purpose of this bill is to add an appointed individual to serve as a cyber defense official within the office of the Secretary of the State. Such person would be in charge of any technical review, testing, or research of the current voting system. This bill would require voting tabulator machines to have two memory cards programmed specifically to the voting machine. This bill would also bring new changes to the privacy of voter information by only publicizing the birth year on an individual’s public voting record.

Substitute Language LCO No. 6691- Line 4 as amended by this act adds 132 “for security and analysis”’” 134 removes University of Ct & replaces with “entity with which the Secretary has entered into agreement with pursuant to 136 subsection (c) of section 9-241, as amended by this act.” 141 adds “for security & analysis”, 142-144 removes UConn & replaces with same as above.

*Specifies why a memory card is sent out & removes UConn Specifically and replaces with a more general “entity with which the Secretary has entered into an agreement”

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Denise Merrill, Secretary of State: The Secretary of the State writes in support of HB 7321. She notes this bill would bring increased cybersecurity defenses to election data and voter file information. She stated, “We must be proactive in ensuring the sanctity of our elections and the privacy of our voters.”
Colleen Murphy, Executive Director, Freedom of Information Commission (FOI): The FOI Commission wrote in opposition of HB 7321 as drafted. They state the current draft negates transparency which is required with voting and elections. Transparency within this bill is necessary to: 1) deter voter fraud, 2) act as a guard against election fraud “by ensuring that registration and election officials, who are charged with entering, updating and maintain voter data are accountable.” The FOI Commission believes the full date of birth should remain as public knowledge to determine voter eligibility and guard against voter fraud. A birth date is a vital identifier in cases where there are more than one individual with the same name.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Liza Andrews, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence: Ms. Andrews states the importance of section 2 of HB 7321. She noted this section protects the privacy of survivors of domestic abuse. She further mentions the notation of key identifiers such as polling location, prevents survivors from voting. The Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence wrote, “This bill will promote and encourage civic engagement while proactively protecting survivors’ right to vote with modest privacy protections.”

Lisbeth Becker, Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut: ROVAC states the following comments in favor of HB 7321: Section 1- The creation of a cyber defense individual would be helpful to towns and cities in the state. Section 2- In general agrees with section 2, however questions the process to modify the Connecticut Voter Registration system to be in compliance should this bill pass. Section 3- has been practiced in previous elections. Section 4- “would halt the practice of combining two districts on one tabulator” which may be problematic for smaller towns. Section 5- raises concerns as cards may be lost in transit and cost towns upwards of $400 per card. Section 6- may work for individuals whose names are not common. ROVAC however stated there are 660 Smiths and 630 Perez’s in the city of Bridgeport alone.

Also in support:
Chas Catania is in support of.
Joseph Hriczo is in support of.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Steve Donen, Resident of Cromwell: The bill does not restrict access to the entire voter list to members of the public as was proposed last year and I appreciate that. That proposal was rejected by this Committee last year and the bill that went forward (H.B. 5173) was limited to restricting access only to the month and day of birth of voters. That bill died on the House calendar.

Reported by: Nicholas Rogers Committee Clerk Date: 4/12/19