Bill No.: SB-358
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EMPLOYEE VOTING OPPORTUNITIES.
Vote Date: 3/19/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 3/12/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Labor and Public Employees.

REASONS FOR BILL:
The bill would require an employer to give an employee upon the employees request a chance to go vote for a state, district or municipal office. The bill allows the employee at least 4 hours away to vote in a regular or special election between 6am to 8pm when by law the polling places are open.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
None submitted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Sal Luciano, President, CT AFL-CIO: The USA has one of the lowest voter participation rates in the developed world. Federal law does not require employers to provide time off to employees to cast their ballots, but the majority of states have some level of protection for employees who want to leave work to vote. The specifics vary by state, but the rules apply to almost every type of workplace. CT is one of only seventeen states that does not provide protection for employees who want to exercise their franchise.

David McGuire, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of CT: This bill would be particularly helpful for people who are vulnerable to disenfranchisement because of physical disabilities, lack of transportation, unpredictable work schedules or other limitations. A study found that Black and Latino voters are two to three times more likely than white voters to wait more than 30 minutes to vote in person. Thirty states require employers to give employees time off to vote, 21 states require paid time off and one requires paid time off for salaried employees.
NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

**Daniel C. Giungi, Senior Legislative Associate, CCM:** This is a new unfunded mandate on CT towns/cities. It would add additional restrictions to municipal employers' ability to schedule employees and judiciously allocate resources during a time when municipalities are already stretched thin. They are unaware of any need for this bill. These benefits should be realized through collective bargaining or be made exclusively available to employees that work a 12-hour shift during a regular or special election.

**Eric Gjede, Vice-President of Government Affairs, CBIA:** Providing employees with four or more hours off during the work day to vote is yet one more added business cost due to the loss of productivity incurred. It is atypical in most jurisdictions to take four hours to vote, even with travel time included. This proposal impedes employers' ability to plan proper shift coverage, particularly in industries where employees care for children, the elderly or those who need medical care.

**Reported by:** Marie Knudsen  
**Date:** March 25, 2019