February 26, 2020

Connecticut Administrations and Elections Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200
Hartford, CT 06106

Testimony to the Committee on Government Administration and Elections, Connecticut General Assembly

In Support of SB No. 233, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS, and SJ No. 15, RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT EARLY VOTING

Esteemed members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Darryl Brackeen, Jr., Alderman of Ward 26 from the City of New Haven. As an elected official and voting rights advocate, I write in support of the passage of S.B. No. 233, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS, which address Automatic Voter Registration, and S.J. No. 15, RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO PERMIT EARLY VOTING.

Having recently experienced working as a precinct captain in the Iowa Presidential Caucus, I know the importance of having professional and technical expertise and community working hand in hand to ensure our elections are secure and as smooth of a process for the citizens. I believe it is essential that every American, regardless of party affiliation, zip code, or working status, has a right to have their voice heard through the power of casting a vote.

I also serve as Chair of the Urban League of Southern Connecticut Young Professionals Social Justice and Advocacy Chairman. We are leading the charge on our voting rights campaign called “#ChooseHopeCT. Frequently many residents statewide are apathetic about voting because they often don’t see their needs reflected or responded to or because politics often becomes so dividing,
they don’t want anything to do with politicians or politics. There is simply a loss of hope within the democratic system. That is why we are here to lift the voices of working families in urban and rural communities who have signed onto a petition on change.org that highlights their support for automatic voter registration and permitting early voting. At the Urban League of Southern Connecticut Young Professionals Advocacy chairman, I have heard from many working families in both urban and rural areas about the barriers they face when attempting to register to vote or when they attempt to vote. As elected leaders, whether State or local, we must make every effort to reduce barriers that hinder individuals from voting, especially young people, those in low-income areas, seniors, and other disadvantaged groups. I believe the ideal way to increase voter participation and make voter registration and voting as accessible as possible to all eligible voters is to implement Automatic Voter Registration.

Automatic Voter Registration exists in sixteen states in the U.S. and has had great success. It has increased voter rolls in those states, thereby strengthening our democracy. Additionally, Automatic Voter Registration would serve to increase voter rolls in Connecticut. It would also alleviate same-day election day stresses and encourage all residents, especially those in urban and rural areas of our State, to participate more in the elections.

I urge you to pass these two pieces of legislation, which I believe would establish a more accurate and secure voter registration system in the State of Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this matter of great concern to my community and our State.

Hon. Darryl Brackeen, Jr.
Honorable Darryl Brackeen, Jr., MRE

Alder, 26th Ward
City of New Haven, CT