Good morning Chairmen Fox and Flexer, Vice Chairs Haskell and Winkler, Ranking Members Sampson and France, and distinguished members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee. My name is Noah Frank, and I am a sophomore pursuing an undergraduate degree at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, as well as a current intern with SOTS Merrill. I come before you today as both a representative of undergraduate students at Connecticut’s flagship university, as well as to share passionate support for SB 233.

I grew up not far from Hartford, just across the river in the beautiful town of South Windsor, Connecticut. At the age of sixteen, my registrars gave me an opportunity that changed the course of my young life. I was invited to work voter sign-in for a municipal referendum in the Spring of 2017. Although it may not sound like much, it was my first introduction into Connecticut’s democratic process; I was inspired. I am proud to come before you today, three years later, as a certified moderator.

By national standards, Connecticut has a unique number of avenues offering registration to future voters. Since the ratification of Public Act 12-56, Connecticut joins 21 other states plus D.C. in offering election day registration. According to a 2010 University of Wisconsin study, most election analysts agree that EDR has the potential to increase turnout in elections from 3% to 6%. The continued success of Connecticut’s EDR system in recent years is a testament to the hard work and cooperation of both the Secretary of The State and this body.

However, SB 233 addresses important key points where this system is in need of update. According to current state statute, registrars may only designate a single location to service EDR within a municipality. I was a college freshman during the November 2018 elections, where EDR lines at Mansfield Town Hall numbered in the hundreds-- causing system shutdowns and long lines. Since that time, registration in Mansfield alone has increased to over 16,000 voters as of last year, suggesting that the 2020 election will see a greater demand for EDR service than in years prior. SB 233 empowers these communities to establish additional locations in servicing this consistently rising demand, and creating opportunities to make lifetime voters.

Many students my age were able to register to vote at their local DMV, through the 2016 MOU with the Secretary of The State. The Brennan Center reports that 11 states plus D.C. have already surpassed Connecticut in implementing full-scale automatic voter registration. SB 233 seeks to bring our state up to speed in expanding AVR through a sophisticated web of state agencies, reaching many more voters. On top of this, AVR’s reliance on continually updated information would guarantee the efficient organization of our voter rolls.

Connecticut’s institutions are only as strong as the amount of people who participate. In 2019, over 85,000 citizens became registered voters, making the impact of these avenues clear. The
results of conversations had in this room have motivated me to continue working in this field in the future. If passed, SB 233 will go down in history as one of Connecticut’s most inclusive measures in getting our citizens involved in our shared goals.

I am humbled to be speaking before you today, and thank you for your time. A vote in favor of SB 233 is a vote investing in the future of Connecticut’s elections.