Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and Members of the GAE Committee

My name is Sue W. Larsen and I am the President of ROVAC and also the Registrar of Voters in South Windsor. I am here to testify on SB 233.

Automatic Voter Registration is a concept everyone should be in favor of. Every citizen should take the responsibility to vote very seriously and with that comes AVR.

Having said that, there are issues that need to be discussed to make this a successful endeavor. The state agencies that would be involved are not listed in the bill. Each agency will have its own complications and this should be discussed with the relevant parties. ROVAC is an interested party and therefore should be a part of any working group. We deal with voter registration all the time and can assist with developing this concept more fully.

Another issue ROVAC is concerned about is the awareness of the person at the agency that she/he is now a registered voter. Do they have an opt out capability? Will the employees at the agencies be sworn to impartiality? What kind of training will they be given to assist the person so the registration process is complete before sending it to the Registrars’ office?

Large cities tend to see a larger turnout of voters when Federal and State offices are on the ballot. This is also true of their Election Day Registration (EDR) locations. It is not uncommon for an individual to not know if they are registered to vote or not and instead of going to a polling place, arrive at the Election Day Registration location instead. These voters, once their status is discovered, are instead redirected to their proper polling place so that they can cast their ballot. Only non-registered citizens can register and vote at an EDR location. The City of Waterbury estimates that during the 2016 Presidential Election over 1,200 voters were redirected from the EDR location and to their proper polling places. This was true of most large cities during Federal and State Elections.

An unintended consequence of AVR could bring a larger number of registered voters to the EDR location, which could extend lines and should the timeline for EDR be extended past 8:00 PM, many of these voters may find that they are registered and unable to cast their ballot because they were unfortunately in the wrong location.

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Sue W. Larsen
South Windsor Registrar of Voters
ROVAC President