Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 233 “An Act Concerning Elections”
Submitted by the Rev. Tracy Johnson Russell
to
The Government Administration and Elections Committee

To the Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, chairs Flexer and Fox, Vice Chairs Haskell and Winkler, my name is Tracy Johnson Russell. I am the Rector of St. Monica’s Episcopal, in Hartford, and a resident of Bethany. I’m submitting this testimony in support of SB 233, An Act Concerning Elections.

Connecticut has the opportunity to move into a future by modernizing our elections which will ensure that every resident of the state would have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, thus ensuring the protection of voting rights for generations to come. With the implementation of Automatic Voter Registration (AVR), which has become law in 16 states, the State would efficiently address the many of the challenges our elections currently face, such as long wait times for same-day registration, over-burdened poll workers, and archaic systems that continue to hamper our elections. Bill 233 needs to be passed in Connecticut because this common-sense, bipartisan reform helps capture the full potential of our democracy, streamline elections, and save money.

AVR would also:
· automatically update voter rolls
· ensure the most accurate voter information
· reduce duplicate registrations
· collect up-to-date information securely and transfer it to the Secretary of the State’s Office and the local registrar of voters
· restore voting rights to people after release from prison
· Increase registration of young, low-income, and diverse voters

States across the country have embraced the value of passing and implementing Automatic Voter Registration. It is imperative that we expand voting rights in Connecticut, thus creating an opportunity to be our elections process that is more convenient and more accessible. This is a solid policy solution and my hope, the members of my congregation, residents of the North End of Hartford, pray that you have the will to implement them. Please support SB 233.

Respectfully Submitted,
Reverend Tracy Johnson Russell