Testimony of Natalie Seier

UConn Public Interest Research Group
Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG)

in support of

SB 233, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS

Chairperson Flexer, Chairperson Fox, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, I am writing in support of SB 233, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTIONS. My name is Natalie Seier and I’m from Storrs, Connecticut. I am currently a sophomore at UConn and I am a member of UConnPIRG.

On my 18th birthday, one of my most memorable moments was registering to vote. Since then, I have not only registered myself but spent countless hours with a clipboard on UConn’s campus walking my fellow students through the process of voter registration.

Student lead activism can be seen all across our state from grassroots work all the way up to legislative initiatives on issues of climate change, affordable education, and food and housing insecurity. There is no question that students are passionate about making real political change. However, we consistently see young people turning out to the polls in the lowest numbers. These trends are not from a lack of concern and engagement but a political process that has not been made accessible and convenient to students and other marginalized groups.

The implementation of automatic voter registration will benefit those who have found challenges in navigating the election process. Young people, especially students, endure numerous stressors from coursework, jobs and financial worries, social pressures, and more. Exercising their vote, their voice, should not be filled with red tape and unfamiliar processes. Automatic Voter Registration has the potential to increase registration rates for people of color, women, and those with lower incomes.

The citizen’s right to vote is the foundation of this country and our state’s democracy. Our system should not complicate that right. Further, our system should not withhold those rights. Current parolees should have the right to vote. To rehabilitate individuals for their personal benefit and that of our communities we must offer the opportunity and encourage civic engagement. Not allowing those who are on parole to vote and exercise their right but expecting them to engage towards a greater society is hypocritical. Our system is to be a place of justice for all and we must encourage voting among all people. I strongly support this bill and urge the Government, Elections, and Administration Committee to do the same. Thank you.