

Housing Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5120

AN ACT REQUIRING HOUSING AUTHORITIES TO PROVIDE VOTER

Title: REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS TO PROSPECTIVE TENANTS.

Vote Date: 3/10/2020

Vote Action: JF To Floor

PH Date: 2/18/2020

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Housing Committee

Co – Sponsors: [Rep. Gary A. Turco, 27th Dist.](#) & [Sen. Saud Anwar, 3rd Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would provide voter registration applications to new tenants of housing authority properties. By providing them with this application it encourages those who are changing the address for where they are registered to vote or registering for the first time while they are filling out all the other paperwork for their new housing. This is an important way to make sure that housing paperwork includes all aspects of moving to a new address and helps voters to keep their addresses up to date.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Stated.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Kathleen Flaherty – ESQ, Executive Director – Connecticut Legal Rights Project, Inc. P.O. Box 351, Silver Street, Middletown, CT 06457 – supports – we support efforts to encourage all CT residents to register to vote and participate in the political process.

Raphael L. Podolsky - Public Policy Advocate – Connecticut Legal Services - 16 Main Street, 2nd floor, New Britain, CT 06051 – support - This bill would give housing authority residents the opportunity to register to vote (or to re-register at a new address) at the time of initial move-in to a housing authority apartment or at annual recertification. It is modeled on a

program already in effect at the New Haven Housing Authority and is analogous to the existing state “Motor Voter” registration program, voter registration forms at government offices, door-to-door registration, and other outreach intended to encourage more Connecticut residents to register to vote. Universal voting – and therefore universal registration – is a fundamental commitment of democracies. While this bill expands the opportunity to register at public agencies (a housing authority is a public agency), it is worth noting that a number of cities across the country have gone much farther to promote voter registration. An internet search, for example, reveals that cities as diverse as Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, Seattle, Washington, East Lansing, Michigan, and Tacoma Park, Maryland, require all landlords, not just housing authorities, to provide new tenants with voter registration forms.

Yvonne Senturia, Election Law Specialist - LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.® 1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 203 Hamden, CT 06514-3183 – support
The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the political process must be open to all citizens and that the right to vote with confidence in the election process must be guaranteed for all. The expansion of opportunities for the registration of potential voters via applications provided to prospective tenants by housing authorities is especially beneficial to those new to voting rolls and to those previously registered who have recently moved within the state.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Stated.

Reported by: Karen Godbout

Date: 03/09/2020