CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee  
March 6, 2020 Public Hearing  
Testimony Submitted by Yvonne Senturia, Election Law Specialist

Support for:

SB365 AAC Online Applications for Absentee Ballots
SB368 AAC The Counting of Incarcerated Persons for Purposes of Determining Legislative Districts
HB5404 AAC The Secretary of State and Ranked-choice Voting

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization committed to effective public policy, the active involvement of citizens in their government and improving the electoral process. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on bills before you today.

SB365 AAC Online Applications for Absentee Ballots
The League of Women Voters is dedicated to improving the electoral process and maximizing voter participation. Instead of downloading a request for an absentee ballot and then printing and mailing/faxing/delivering to town clerk who then mails the absentee ballot, this legislation removes one step in the process. The League supports SB365, which allows any eligible elector to electronically request an absentee ballot through the Secretary of the State’s internet web site.

SB368 AAC The Counting of Incarcerated Persons for Purposes of Determining Legislative Districts
The League of Women Voters is dedicated to maximizing voter participation and civic engagement. Incarcerated individuals are not members of the community that hosts the prison. Their family, friends and coworkers are all in their home community. Other groups, such as boarding school students who keep ties to the family address are counted at that address despite not being physically present there on census day. This practice introduces unequal treatment of CT residents and inconsistency in census procedures benefiting distribution of federal resources (eg. schools, roads, libraries and hospitals) in towns where prisons are located rather than the prisoners’ home communities. The League supports SB368, which counts incarcerated persons in the census as part of their home community, rather than the location where they are incarcerated.

HB5404 AAC The Secretary of State and Ranked-choice Voting
The League of Women Voters has a long history of careful study prior to taking a position on an issue. While the League does not have a position on alternative voting methods like ranked choice or proportional voting, enough interest has been expressed that the League would support careful study of this issue.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment upon these bills.