

TESTIMONY OF TOM SWAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONNECTICUT CITIZEN ACTION GROUP (CCAG)

March 10, 2021

BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

ON

H.B. 5872 An Act Expanding Automatic Application for Voter Registration to Certain State Agencies

S.B. No. 640 An Act Concerning Online Platforms and Campaign Finance

S.B. No. 761 An Act Permitting the Use of Citizens' Election Program Grant Funds to Offset a Participating Candidate's Child Care Costs

S.B. No. 883 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

H.B. 5651 AAC Absentee Ballots for Certain Detained Individuals

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and other members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee my name is Tom Swan, and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. On behalf of our thousands of members statewide I want to thank you for raising various proposals today to strengthen our democracy. I would like to comment on several bills before you today.

HB 5872 An Act Expanding Automatic Application for Voter Registration to Certain State Agencies

We proposed amending the earlier bill you heard on codifying to the compact with DMV to include other agencies as HB 5872 proposes to do. We believe this is a basic issue of equality. The current arrangement with DMV has been a smashing success. However, DMV does not reach significant populations including a larger percentage of older, younger, poorer, and urban residents.

We do have a concern about the section of the bill that appears to limit peoples' ability to change their party affiliation as part of AVR. We think people should be able to change their affiliation as part of this process.

S.B. No. 640 An Act Concerning Online Platforms and Campaign Finance

With campaigns and political groups relying more on online platforms every election cycle it is imperative that there becomes a way for voters to be able to identify who is behind online ads.

We make candidates put their information on media and mail pieces. Placing the onus on the platforms benefiting from the ads make sense for online communications. The public has a right to know who is trying to influence their vote and this bill is a common sense tool to do it.

S.B. No. 761 An Act Permitting the Use of Citizens' Election Program Grant Funds to Offset a Participating Candidate's Child Care Costs.

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We agree with the purpose of these bills that childcare is a valid campaign expense and should be considered a proper use of CEP funds. We also support the additional recommendations from the Governor's Council.

H.B. 5651 AAC Absentee Ballots for Certain Detained Individuals

I hope we can all agree that we want people who are incarcerated to be able to successfully integrate back in society when their detention ends. We believe this bill not only helps eligible incarcerated people exercise their rights, it also makes clear that we want them to be full participants in our society upon their release.