

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-6912

AN ACT CONCERNING NONDISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION REGARDING  
**Title:** AND CONDUCT TOWARD CERTAIN ELECTION WORKERS.

**Vote Date:** 03/24/2023

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/20/2023

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill, upon submission of a written request, shall allow certain election workers to request that their residential addresses be exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Individuals also found attempting to harass or intimidate election workers, threaten to disclose personal information, or interfere with the orderly process of voting, shall be guilty of a class D felony. This comes after a heated 2020, general election, and an increase in threats to election workers nationwide.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

**Stephanie Thomas, Secretary of state, Office of the Secretary of State:** Secretary of state Stephanie Thomas urges support for HB-6912, noting how election workers who are volunteers, are often subject of harassment and threats. The Secretary of State also notes how, "Given rising temperatures surrounding our elections, we've heard the concerns of election workers here in Connecticut who are seriously reconsidering if they should serve as poll workers or registrars of voters for fear of threats or violence that may come in 2024". Due to these reasons, the Secretary of State strongly supports HB-6912, believing that harsher penalties for these actions will signal that Connecticut cares about its public servants.

**Colleen M. Murphy, Executive Director and General Counsel, Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information (CCFOI):** Ms. Murphy and the FOI Commission oppose HB-6912, citing that it is overly broad, and provides little protection if any to those the bill claims to protect. They further note that this bill does not define what happens when an individual is no

longer an election worker, and that there is no system in place to inform municipal agencies to remove said individuals address if they were an election worker. They conclude their testimony, by once more urging opposition to HB-6912.

**Michele Jacklin, Legislative Co-Chair, Connecticut Council on Freedom of Information (CCFOI):** Ms. Jacklin and the CCFOI, oppose Hb-6912, citing that the removal of addresses of federal employees from public view, serves no purpose as these addresses are already readily available should you even type someone's name onto google. They also note that this bill also makes it more difficult for the public to hold federal employees accountable. Citing the case of Melissa McCaw for evidence on this claim. Ms. Jackline concludes her testimony citing that HB-6912, Erodes the Freedom of Information Act, and does not provide municipal election workers with adequate security.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

None Expressed

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT):** Ms. Zaccagnino, and the ACLU-CT, oppose HB-6912, citig that their organization is "committed to open government. Few things ensure that a government effectively serves its people as much as transparency". Ms. Zaccagnino also notes the importance of the FOIA, and states how it is a key tool for holding government accountable to the public. To conclude her testimony, Ms. Zaccagnino notes how exemptions to FOIA, must be seriously reviewed before action is taken, and once more notes her opposition to HB-6912.

**Anonymous, Concerned Citizen:** Anonymous Concerned Citizen opposes all Bills

**Anonymous:** Anonymous opposes all bills.

**Reported by: Thomas Togneri**

**Date: 03-24-2023**