

SB 412

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1971

senate -

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house -

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elections -

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CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

PROCEEDINGS
1971

VOL. 14
PART 7
2874-3413

June 4, 1971

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favor of passage signify by saying, "aye". Opposed, "nay". Bill is passed.

THE CLERK:

CAL. NO. 1163. copies have been placed upon your desks.

Favorable report of the joint committee on Elections. Substitute Senate Bill 1794. An Act Concerning the Daily Correction of Enrollment Lists and the Discontinuance of Separate Enrollment Lists.

SENATOR DUPONT:

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. The title of this bill points out, it allows the correction of these enrollments lists at any time up to five days before a primary, caucus or convention. I urge the adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage, will you remark further? If not, all those in favor signify by saying, "aye". Opposed, "nay". The bill is passed.

THE CLERK:

CAL. NO. 1173. Favorable report of the joint committee on Elections. Substitute Senate Bill 412. An Act Concerning the Admission of Electors by Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters.

SENATOR DUPONT:

I move acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Mr. President and members of the circle, this is a lengthy bill. It revises considerably and simplifies the method of being admitted as an elector, here, in the State of Connecticut. It allows for the Town Clerk, the Assistant Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters and other officials to admit voters. It provides for a mandatory sessions on the Saturday immediately following Labor day. It provides for evening sessions. It does eliminate

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the mandatory monthly sessions, that have been found so objectionable all over the years. It finalizes the action of these people so that you wouldn't need a board of admissions as we have had in the past.

I would point out to the circle, and for the record, that on page 1, of the bill, there is language that appears to be stricken out on the original bill, on line 25, 26 and 27, words on the Saturday immediately following Labor Day, from 12 O'Clock Noon to 4 O'Clock P.M. and. That language should be in the bill, rather than stricken out. I don't know how that came about but, it does appear on the copies on your desk.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, you understand that?

SENATOR DUPONT:

I believe it's a good bill and it will simplify the method of people becoming voters in the State of Connecticut. And I think this should be our objective. I urge adoption.

SENATOR IVES:

Mr. President, I rise to support this bill. Most of the provisions in the bill are a product of the Elections Commission and the Elections Committee of this session, has refined it. And as Senator Dupont says, I think it's a major step forward for the admission of electors. One other change, and I'm not sure that he mentioned it. It provides that the Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy Registrar is in addition to the Town Clerk can admit electors. This in the City areas will be of a big assistance because of the many other duties the Town Clerk and Registrars have.

THE CHAIR:

Question is on passage, will you remark further? If not all those in

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favor signify by saying, "aye". Opposed, "nay". The bill is passed.

THE CLERK:

Clerk has been informed that an item on page 6, is now ready. At least the amendment.

CAL. NO. 1028, File 1455. Favorable report of the joint committee on Elections Substitute Senate Bill 1302. An Act Providing for a Presidential Primary.

SENATOR DUPONT:

Mr. President, I move the acceptance of the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill. Clerk has an amendment. I would yield to Senator Rimer.

SENATOR RIMER:

Mr. President, will the Clerk, please read the amendment?

THE CLERK:

SENATE AMENDMENT A, offered by Senator Rimer, Ives, Petroni and DeNardis:

In line 21 insert a period after the last word. In line 22, delete and the said secretary as Chairman and in lieu thereof, insert the following the secretary of state shall serve ex-officio without a vote. In line 23, after the committee, insert by vote of 75% of all members entitled to vote. In line 125, delete the last word. Delete line 126 to line 151 and substitute in lieu thereof, the following: a delegate and alternate delegate position to which a presidential candidate is entitled under this section, shall be filled by the state convention by election from among the party members nominated from the floor of such convention, who pledge themselves to vote for such presidential candidate. Delete starting in Line 181, with four all of the remainder of line 181 and delete lines 182 to 194 inclusive.

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS
1971**

**VOL. 14
PART 13
5555-6226**

Tuesday, June 8, 1971 12.

MBS

of the pin that many of you wear, try a little kindness.

RONALD SARASIN, 95th District:

I will certainly try. On page 2, Calendar No. 1566.

On page 3, Calendar No. 1578.

On page 4, Calendar No. 1589 and

The next item, Calendar No. 1590 and

The second item from the bottom, Calendar No. 1593, I would ask that those items be removed from the Consent Calendar.

MR. SPEAKER:

Your objection is noted, these items will not appear on the Consent Calendar.

RONALD SARASIN, 95th District:

Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of the joint committee's favorable reports and passage of the bills on the Consent Calendar which are as follows:

On page 1, Calendar No. 1556, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 0255, An Act Concerning Certain Vehicles Travelling at Slow Speed on Highways, file 1513.

Calendar No. 1560, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 412, An Act Concerning the Admission of Electors by Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters, file 1698.

Calendar No. 1562, Substitute for Senate Bill No. 448, An Act Concerning Motor Vehicle Department Hearings, file 1596.

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

ELECTIONS

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ELECTIONS

Representative John P. Maiocco, Jr., Presiding

Members Present: Senators: Dupont, Crafts, Cashman

Representatives: Tacinelli, Martin, Fox,
Green, Maiocco, Panuzio, Healey

Rep. Maiocco: Goodmorning - I am Co-chairman of the Elections Committee - to my right is Senator Dupont, Senate Chairman of the Elections Committee. Senator Ives, would you like to start?

Senator Ives, 32nd District: Speaking specifically on bills SB318, SB319, SB412 and SJR21 and when I conclude very briefly on these I am general on the 18 year old voting.

SB318 - AUTOMATIC REGISTRATION OF FEDERAL ELECTORS AS STATE ELECTORS upon their attaining the age of 21 automatically, as I understand it there is some question that these federal electors may have to come back in when they are 21 and go through the process of being made a voter over again. This just says if they have been made a federal elector upon attaining the age of 21 they will automatically be on the regular enrollment lists. If the 18 year old voting passes either in Congress or a constitutional amendment this time in our session, this would not be necessary but for the time being, it would.

SB319 - PERTAINING TO "THE ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE" - allows a federal elector and anyone over the age of 18 who owns property in their own name to be able to vote in town meetings. I have submitted a package of bills in behalf of the 18 year olds, one of which would allow 18 year olds and above to hold property in their own name, and this is before another committee.

SB412 - THE ADMISSION OF ELECTORS BY TOWN CLERKS AND REGISTRARS OF VOTERS - allowing assistant town clerks and assistant registrars to be able to take application for enrollment as voters and also makes the provision that when the town clerks and the registrars and the assistants complete this action, that they are a full fledged voter without going to the board of review. This is a bill that has also come out of the Election Commission which studied the situation the past two years.

SJR21 - This is asking Congress to pass a federal

recent Supreme Court decision and have reacted so quickly, as you can see by the vast number of bills before you on this subject. It is for these very reasons that prompted me to appear before you today and heartily endorse what I feel is the only way of avoiding problems which are undoubtedly going to result.

I have already indicated any specific recommendations relating to the implementation of dual age voting, will be withheld pending receipt of the Attorney General's opinion. May I also respectfully urge that the committee withhold action with regard to such bills until the opinion is received. I know that you are already aware of my own conclusion that the solution does rest with an amendment to the federal constitution restoring the nation to a single age voting. However, I am also supporting a stand-by provision which would amend our own state constitution to provide 18 year old voting in state and local elections and for the automatic registration for those registered as 18 year old voters.

Rep. Maiocco: Do you have an indication as to when the opinion will be forthcoming from the Attorney General?

Mrs. Schaffer: We hope very soon. We have been in touch with his office and we do know that Congress is preparing with great speed and from what we have been able to learn they are not contemplating holding public hearings on the Constitutional Amendment but expect to bring it directly to the floor and rush it through so it can go to the states as quickly as possible while practically all of our State Legislatures are in session. I might also add there is SB/12 which extends the powers of the town clerks and registrars to receive applications for admission as electors to their assistants and deputies and it makes the action of these officials conclusive. This bill is most deserving of your favorable action and might add of your swift action as extra hands are needed in every town and city in the state. This bill in body is the recommendation of the commission to revise the election laws to provide for this long overdue liberalization of our laws. The commission to revise the election laws has been a very excellent and hard-working commission and is putting forth many recommendations for changes in these laws to your committee. I would urge you to look kindly upon them. They have worked very hard and have gone into these issues very thoroughly. SB/12 is in keeping with my strongly held feeling that the franchise should be extended wherever possible and that every effort should be made to expand and not restrict the franchise. Thank you.

Mr. Petti, Representative, Ct. Prison Association: I am here on HB5308 - CONCERNING DENIAL AND RESTORATION OF ELECTORAL RIGHTS. I don;t know if you realize that a man coming out of prison has to wait six months and pay ten dollars before he can vote, can be turned down by three commissioners and in our law it says he has no chance to go to another court for an objection if he is turned down.

I believe a man who has served his sentence has the right upon being released from prison to have his voting rights restored. He has already served what the law has requested and why should the State of Connecticut place upon him further restrictions. I know of no one who has to pay \$10.00 to at least be heard to be able to vote. When I investigated this two years ago, if you hadn't voted before and you came out of prison, and there was a test case in Hartford, the person could go and be registered immediately and be given his voting rights back without going through the commission on forfeited rights. I would like to object to this forfeited rights opinion and support 5308 and hope you will look at it from the constitution that I do not believe that anyone should be denied the right to vote for the President of the United States or the Governor of Connecticut, only because he has committed a crime which he has paid for and fulfilled his obligations to society. I would be glad to talk to any of you further on this bill.

Senator Dupont: What is the purpose of your association?

Mr. Petti: I represent the Conn. Prison Association and they are in favor of this bill. We work with inmates within the prison and outside the prison, find them employment, helping them to secure housing. We have a volunteer sponsor's program with 200 or more men that work as laymen with individuals and we have many obligations. Thank you for your time.

Harry Hammer, Deputy Secretary of State: I would like to mention with respect to the previous speaker that the bill concerning forfeited rights has been recommended by the commission for revision and one of the recommendations which has not been officially filed is that the commission on forfeited rights be abolished.

I spoke to Senator's Baird's office this morning and he asked me to thank Mrs. Schaffer for a prompt response to his telegram requesting details on the impact of the Supreme Court decision on voting

procedures in Connecticut. He also pointed out if Connecticut endorses this memorializing resolution that we would probably be the first state to do so. At present he pointed out there are 85 co-sponsors in the United States Senate of this resolution. He hopes the sub-committee will report it out tomorrow afternoon at 2:30. They are having an executive session and there will be no public hearing. It is also expected the House will report favorably. Up to a week ago I was somewhat dubious as to the chances for this amendment being passed by 3/4 of the states. I learned this morning that in connection with the Governor's Conference now meeting in Washington, that 36 of the 37 governors have announced their support for the federal constitutional amendment and that is just one short of the requirement of 38 states, so these governors reflect the sense of their legislators which is a fair assumption.

I have read the opinion again this morning and what the Supreme Court has said is that Congress can establish qualifications for voting but it is up to the state to determine the time and manner of voting. Justice Black in what is in affect is a one man decision or one Judge decision has said on behalf of a divided court, but really on behalf of himself, that Congress can carefully create the problem but the states have to resolve them.

I don't think our federal system was intended for that purpose. I think if Congress has determined that uniformity of age is a pre-requisite for voting that the guidelines should be established by the Congress and that the Federal Constitution establish uniformity in this area. Otherwise it would seem to me to be impossible for us to implement the very confusing mandate of the U. S. Supreme Court decision.

In view of the fact that the governors are meeting in Washington and both the Senate and House Judiciary Committees will be acting on this bill this week, I would hope that Connecticut would be the first state in the nation to formerly memorialize United States Congress on a manner which is apparently no longer controversial. Thank you.

Rep. Maiocco: We are not going to take up the bills individually as the matters intertwine so we will ask that you address yourself to any of the bills on the list or which is in the general area of the subject matter.

Wm. J. Murphy, Legislative Chairman, Registrar of Voters Association: I would like to speak briefly on most of the bills here this morning.

HB6975 - CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR VOTERS EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY YEARS OF AGE - I would be opposed to that because I am in favor of SB342 which allows paper ballots for voters under 21 years of age.

HB5268 - AMENDMENT TO THE ELECTION LAWS CONCERNING THE REMOVAL OF VOTERS' NAMES FROM THE REGISTRY. This would be alright if his name appeared on the previous years completed registry list.

HB5023 - REGISTRY AND ENROLLMENT LISTS - We are opposed to that because of the semiannual feature. We believe in the synchronized declaration of the registry list but annually.

HB5033 - RESTORATION OF PERSONS LEFT OFF FINAL REGISTRY LIST - We would oppose because it is similiar to HB5268.

HB5269 - PARTY DESIGNATIONS ON VOTING REGISTRY LISTS - We would oppose this because we believe the present situation that exists each town by its legislative body decide to put their party designations on the registry list if they so choose and we believe this is the better way of doing it.

HB5267 - COMMUNICATIONS OR NOTICES TO ELECTORS - We definitely oppose this bill because it would be very very expensive and almost impossible to administer.

HB5022 - CLARIFY THE RIGHT OF A NEW VOTER TO IMMEDIATE PARTY ENROLLMENT - We would favor this bill and if we adopt SB412 this would become automatic .

HB5308 - CONCERNING DENIAL AND RESTORATION OF ELECTORAL RIGHTS - We agree in principle with this bill but would prefer with the bill that will be put in to revise the election laws.

Senator Dupont: Excuse me, Mr. Murphy, do you have any idea when those bills will be statute form?

Mr. Murphy: We are meeting this afternoon with the Secretary of State.

Mr. Hammer: I would like to state that the final meeting of the Commission was held on February 11th. At that time a number of bills were approved in final form. The bills have all been introduced as statement of purpose bills and this committee will be in a position to act upon them next week or so.

SB318 - AUTOMATIC REGISTRATION OF FEDERAL ELECTORS AS STATE ELECTORS - We favor this bill but of course if Congress acts differently this maybe necessary but as things stand, we favor it.

SB319 - PERTAINING TO THE ELIGIBILITY TO VOTE - We hold no opinion.

SB628 - APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION AS ELECTORS - We are in general in favor of this.

SB412 - ADMISSION OF ELECTORS BY TOWN CLERKS AND REGISTRARS OF VOTERS - We definitely favor this bill by Senator Ives.

SB945 - SHORTEN RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS - it doesn't say to what so we can't very well have an opinion.

SB934 - MONTHLY ENROLLMENT SESSIONS - We definitely favor except we say it should not be done in a session held within 21 days of a primary, should not be in effect.

Certainly the bill which favors the admission of electors by affidavit, we are definitely opposed to. We believe that daily registrations and with the additional sessions that can be held by the authorization of electors, there is no reason for anyone to say they haven't had ample opportunity. Therefore, we oppose it.

Senator Dupont: With respect to SB947 - I believe this is a similar bill that Senator Lieberman was speaking in reference to. He mentioned practices in other states and I wonder if in your experiences you have knowledge of practices that have developed as a result of this type of registration.

Mr. Murphy: I do not but I can see the many pitfalls in it. We are going through a great deal of trouble here to say that a person may attain the full right to vote by just appearing before the town clerks and registrars, then at the same time we turn around and say we will let anyone in a bar or anywhere else take an affidavit and bring in hundreds of names. Some of them in many cases might already be voters. It would really be a nightmare and I see no reason for it. Why should someone whether we know he is qualified or not, what kind of a form is he going to use, who is going to notarize this, etc. What control is there on it.

Senator Dupont: Apparently other states have something similar at least according to Mr. Lieberman's testimony.

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ELECTIONS

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 1971

Mr. Murphy: The fact that some other state has it doesn't mean anything to me personally because I think we have the intelligence to work out our own laws without having to follow someone else.

Senator Crafts: Would you have any objection to the justices of the peace performing this service to the general elector?

Mr. Murphy: Very definitely. Again I see no reason for it. The person has ample opportunity to come into the town clerk's office to be made a voter and if they can't, what would make them think that the person who would not go to a public building to be made a voter, would make them go to a polling place on election day? If they are so lazy and care so little about the right to vote that they can't go to a public place to be made a voter, I don't think they deserve the right to vote. Thank you.

Thayer Baldwin, Jr., New Haven: I speak on behalf of myself and as Elections Co-ordinator for Caucus for Connecticut Democrats and I am going to address myself to bills that are of great interest to this committee.

SB318 - by Senator Ives which is a mechanical bill, which I think should be reported very quickly by this committee and enacted merely enables the registrar to transfer automatically a federal elector to full elector status. Because it has created some problems in other areas of law, I think it should also include that if a federal elector has enrolled in the party that his enrollment also be transferred at the same time. It would have to be provided in a different statute but I would recommend that this committee provide for both of those things to happen. There is not automatic transferral of enrollment from town to town now if someone moves and I would hate to see the same mistake made.

SB319 - also introduced by Senator Ives relates to town meetings and gives federal electors full participation in town meetings across the state. I support this bill and would want to extend the franchise in all levels of government to the 18 to 21 for all the reasons that have been articulately enumerated before this committee and before the legislature itself. I might note that Senator Lieberman testified on a bill which he introduced that has not reached this committee yet, which would essentially do the same thing as SB319 so you might use that as a prototype but adds the words federal elector to all of the statutes which provide for enrollment in parties. It's done mechanically through

those statutes and is a bill which would extend immediately rights to 18 year olds to participate in the party business and primaries at any levels for any office that were to be held. I think it would have two benefits - the two major advantages are to indicate the good faith of the legislature and to establish we are striving to include every possible level, the participation and the cooperation of this great segment of our society.

It would immediately create specific rights with respect to elections in the 18-21 year olds so this has a mechanical advantage - all those who would have the right to participate in primaries would then have reason now to register and our registrars would not be burdened with the flow of people whose rights accrued sometime in 1972. It is mechanically advisable for the whole state of Connecticut and I would recommend the committee would act favorably.

HB5268 - Entered as only a statement of purpose bill - to amend the election laws so that an elector who has had his name erroneously removed from the registry by reason of assumed non-residence, shall have his name restored at his polling place on election day by executing and submitting an affidavit that he is still a resident of his listed address and has no other permanent residence since his registration as an elector. I believe Mr. Murphy addressed himself negatively or at least the condition that he appear on the last registry list and I think that is probably a reasonable amendment and I suggest it because of my experience on election day with people who present themselves to vote who have been removed and have no knowledge of their removal and are put to substantial burden in order to participate in our democratic processes.

I think a good standard for the committee to apply on election bills is how can they effectively make it possible for everyone to register, everyone to vote with the least possible effort and embarrassment. You know in our democratic society it is not an easy thing to vote and we have to go out of our way in our laws to make it easy for people to do it and right now there are many election laws that make it difficult and one of them is if your name has been removed from the list and you are not aware of that removal. You present yourself as a voter on election day and you have to travel all over the city or town to be certified by a registrar and then back to your polling place. Most people do not have the time, do not do it therefore I recommend the favorable adoption of 5268.

HB5267 addresses really the same problem in a different way and will cure much of the problem before election

day. I think both bills should be enacted. Registrars currently send notices to people who are about to be removed and this requires that it be sent by registered mail, therefore the people on the receiving end will receive it. It would mean additional expense but it would save problems later on in the election process.

Senator Dupont -I'm not sure of the intention of this bill. Let's assume under this 5267 that an elector has moved - in other words if you have moved away, you are delivering a registered letter to his last known address?

Mr. Baldwin: No, it would be so it would be delivered to him.

Senator Dupont: Quite frequently you are unable to locate people, what would the affect of that be?

Mr. Baldwin: If there were no forwarding address I think you would then be entitled to remove his name from the list and then it would be picked up by HB5268. If the person was on vacation or uable to be located and you were willing to swear, issue an affidavit on election day that he still lived at that address and is a qualified elector, then he would be allowed to vote.

I don't think there is any question that the registrars have to attain the right to remove people from the list whom they cannot contact through the mail by these processes. There are two problems, one is that the people they are sent to might be on vacation they might get lost, misplaced and never receive these cards. I know every election there are 5 or 6 people who come into the polling place I work in who have this very problem and were undoubtedly sent the challenge card but have no knowledge they were sent; did not check their lists and put to an extreme burden to travel all over the city to effect their right to vote. There is no question that the registrars should have the right to remove them if they come to the conclusion that someown does not live at the address listed, but what this bill does instead of sending a challenge card which does get lost sometimes, is to send something by registered mail directly to the individual whose rights are being challenged and then he has effective notice his rights are being challenged and can cure it at that time.

HB6975 - There is a corresponding bill which talks about paper ballots and I would like to vigorously oppose on the grounds that the burden, particularly in cities, of establishing separate polling places

for 18-21 year olds the distances they would have to travel and the inconvenience that it would entail, would be entirely too burdensome. We should make voting and participation in the democratic process the easiest possible process. If the only alternative is to create paper ballots at local polling places for federal electors, then I think that should be the route taken rather than set up separate polling places.

I would like to address myself finally on the fine bill of the Elections Commission SB412 introduced by Senator Ives. There are parts of it which I support but which I would ask for greater powers. It creates election officials, those who can register in greater and in greater numbers than have existed so far. It includes town clerks, registrars of voters, deputy registrars and assistant registrars. I support that change that is contained in Section 1, all of these people are then given the title of admitting officials and have the power to admit voters to office and I think it is comparative to many other states and is a very narrow definition of those who have the right to admit people as electors. Section 2, although it does liberalize and extend the right to register to vote, I don't believe goes far enough. I support the extension and would like to have it go farther. I would like to have as Senator Lieberman suggested earlier in this hearing, have all of these admitting officials have the right and the power to enroll or register voters in specific parts of the town or city at any time. I'd like us to extend our confidence in them to register at local neighborhoods at any time and have them be available for that admission during the process of the annual canvass. It would amaze me that we have a system where assistant registrars have to travel through their entire district and determine who is there and who is not and strike people from the list but have no power to add people to the list particularly shut-ins and those who have not had the opportunity to make the office.

I would like to address myself to Mr. Murphy's remarks to the affect that anyone too lazy to go to the office is not entitled to the franchise, I have a view which is opposed to that and I think all of us are entitled to the franchise and we should encourage its exercise at every possible step. In cities there is a reluctance of a large portion of our population which is not understandably the one which is the one most unregistered - to travel from their particular home or neighborhood down into town and take on the establishment - it is very difficult

and a frightening process, although it is not to me not to Mr. Murphy or most of us here but to those individuals who are now largely unregistered, it is a very difficult and frightening process and is not simply laziness that prevents their attendance at the registrars office. If we are to involve this large segment of our population in the democratic process, I think it is clear now that we are going to have to go there and register those voters.

Senator Cashman: May I address myself to this point the law is written that any enrollment session of the registrar of voters at any public place on days and at times of which he will give him five days prior notice, and the newspaper has a general circulation within the town so allows them fundamentally to go anywhere in town and have enrollment.

Mr. Baldwin: It empowers them to but there are other bills in our election laws now which empowers registrars to do things. One that I might point out is the one that allows the registrars to create a special session for enrollment prior to a primary which is apart from the traditional dates of enrollment, which are once every six months. It has been my experience that registrars because they are severely burdened with detailed work in making their lists, do not avail themselves to the privileges under the law and in the powers of registration should be extended to people who are in the local areas and they should be empowered specifically and conveniently under the annual canvass to enroll people. It goes farther than public places, it requires enrollment on that canvass. I approve of this bill and think it extends the power to register a great deal but this particular section does not go as far as I would like to see it go.

I will go very briefly through the rest of the bill. I support all of it - section 3 - generally talks about places of employment, we already have a section on that. I would like to add another section to it which addresses itself to federal electors and tries to accomplish another purpose. I believe Senator Lieberman has a bill in on this question too which you have not received and would like to add that registrars be asked to go in the third week of May or some similar time to local high schools to register those people right out of civic classes who have reached the age of 18. I don't think this would put an extensive burden on the registrars but would enable him to accomplish the process of registration in a place where the people are located at a time when they were involved with the things which involve our democratic process and would encourage them to register. This would be an appropriate bill

to add that provision to.

Section 4 I think is the real meat of this bill and essentially does away with the Board of Admission of Electors and a goal I think this committee and the legislature should pursue. I support Section 5, Section 6 is mechanical and a good provision. Section 7 is another area that needs attention and that is to encourage the registration of admitting officials under the language of this bill to also extend and requires them to extend the opportunity to enroll in political parties, a provision which I think is necessary. Section 8 addresses itself to the registration of physically disabled persons, as I suggested earlier, the admitting officials as enumerated in this bill, had the power to register at someone's home, that section would be unnecessary but in the current state of the bill, I think is an excellent section and deserves your support. Section 11 and 12 are mechanical. I would like to support the abolishment on the Commission on Forfeited Rights and give convicts the full rights of the democratic franchise.

Generally in conclusion I would like to say it is important in these areas of registration and in the area of the 18 year old vote and exactly what we can make it mean in this state, that it is important that this committee and the legislature act swiftly for the reasons that I have enumerated throughout my talk with reference to specific bills. It will help mechanically the registrars to have more time to effect the rules and substantiate us to have full participation in the democratic process. I know I have been over long and thank you for your attention and patience with me in trying to get across some of my views. Thank you.

Rep. William O'Neil: I am here this morning to speak in favor of SB945 and SB947. Members of the committee, a major plank of the 1970 democratic platform dealt with the liberalization of an election law to make the electoral process more uniform and accessible to the people. The recently enacted Federal Voter's Rights law provides that the residence requirements for registration to vote in federal elections be thirty days. As you know, our present law prohibits registration until a person has been a resident of the state and a town for at least six months. It is the proposal of the Democratic leadership in SB945 that our residence requirement be shortened to 30 days so that it conforms with the federal law.

With regard to SB947 it is our belief that absentee registration, similar to that now afforded to our men in the military be provided for those whose

Mrs. Kenneth Hanson, Orange: I am speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Connecticut. I should like to speak in favour of four bills which you have before you concerning the admission of electors. Also with your permission I would like to give a statement that I will be making to the committee which will hear specifically the amendments to the Connecticut Constitution, on Friday at 2 o'clock.

We strongly support SB412, which would extend to assistant town clerks and assistant registrars of voters the authority to admit electors and would provide that admissions by town clerks, registrars and their assistants be final without the necessity for approval by the board of admissions. At the present time the town clerk or registrar of voters may receive applications for admission as an elector, examine qualifications and administer oaths, yet, a considerable lapse of time occurs up to a month between the time of application and the time of admission. This lapse results not only in confusion on the part of the applicant regarding his electoral status but also, upon occasion, in the infringement of his voting rights. For example, a person who has applied for admission as an elector and enrolled in a party and is otherwise eligible to vote in a primary, may be unable to do so if there are no more sessions of the board of admission of electors between his application and the primary date.

In this regard HB5022 attempts to clarify the right of a new voter to immediate party enrollment. However this created the anomalous situation in which one may be on a party enrollment list but not yet an elector. The adoption of SB412 would eliminate this type of problem while greatly facilitating and simplifying the process of registration.

Again with respect to SB412, we should like to stress the importance of an appeals procedure for the rejected applicant. This bill specifies a right of a rejected applicant to apply for reexamination of his qualifications by the board of admissions of electors. We support this procedure but note that there may be other acceptable alternatives. I have listened with great interest to the comments which many people have made today. I would be very interested in knowing how the registrar of voters feel about having the person who does the official canvass make voters. It seems to me that if an official person, there is no bill on that question and if a bill comes up, we would like to speak in favor of that.

removed or safely modified, this should be done.

In closing, our feeling with the federal amendment, which we feel is the only true solution to this unfortunate situation that exists, are so strong that our office will cooperate and do anything we can to encourage the adoption of the amendment to the federal constitution and ultimately its ratification by 3/4 of the states. This has top priority.

A letter was sent by Mrs. Schaffer to the General Assembly cometime ago with regard to it and attached was a copy of the resolution. I think she may send this to the Assembly again and if at that time we can be of any help and it is proper for both of us to be there, we will cooperate. Thank you.

Althea McLaughlin, Registrar of Voters, Mansfield: I would like to speak very briefly from the point of a practicing registrar. The question of extending registration of individuals through use of the annual canvass, that has been suggested as an extension to Section 2 of SR412, I think is interesting. I notice that Miss Tatano was worried that by changing procedures we might increase the possibility of fraud but I do think that the annual canvass is carried out jointly by the Democrat and Republican Registrars, would provide an opportunity to extend the franchise to the people who find it most difficult, because of lack of transportation illness, house-bound people who we do see on these annual canvasses and these are the people that are not registered - people who are fearful to come to their town hall or work odd schedules. There are people that we see in our canvass that could be registered by the registrars working together and without any danger of fraud. I think would be an excellent idea. Thank you.

Mrs. Claire Gritzer, So. Windsor, Registrar of Voters and also with the Registrars Association as a Director. I hadn't expected to speak this morning, although I must add to the comment made by the registrar from Mansfield. All towns are very different and therefore what she said could possibly be very effective in her own town, being small, and both registrars go out and do the canvass, but in large cities and towns we hire people to do this and do not always hire the deputies or assistants. Everyone wants to add duties to the registrars and I think it's fine but everyone forgets that we are basically part time, definitely underpaid in most cases and there are only nine towns in Connecticut with full time registrars. I am willing to cooperate and do whatever the law requires me to at my job but I cannot see not taking

another look at the registrars salaries and duties
and not just keep giving them more work. Thank you.

Rep. Maiocco: This hearing will be closed and I thank you
for your attention and testimony.