

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

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CONNECTICUT
GEN. ASSEMBLY
SENATE

PROCEEDINGS
1974

VOL. 17
PART 3
981-1359

April 23, 1974

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Calendar. Is there any objection? There being none, it is so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Calendar No. 0417. File No. 200. Substitute for House Bill No. 5722. AN ACT ALLOWING THE CHOICE OF A POLLING PLACE IN AN ADJACENT VOTING DISTRICT IN CASES OF HARDSHIP TO VOTERS. (As amended by House Amendment Schedule "A").

Favorable Report of the Committee on ELECTIONS.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Scalo.

SENATOR SCALO:

Mr. President, I move for acceptance of the Joint Committee's Favorable Report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

SENATOR SCALO:

As the result of the re-districting mandated by the Supreme Court, we found that the prior historical districts within municipalities and communities across the state were done away with and they were court-awarded lines and what happened was this --- that there was no provision, there was no consideration taken at that time for polling places within that district. There are many areas where there, in fact, are no municipal buildings. There are no suitable facilities contained within the voting district itself. What this bill would then allow would be that the municipalities, upon the

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agreement of both registrars of voters, so that it would have to be a bi-partisan agreement, can then designate, in advance, the location of a polling place other than located within the district itself. I think this is necessary legislation. Many municipalities across the state have contacted the Elections Committee, asking for the enactment of such a bill. As I said, there are safeguards. It does require bi-partisan support. It must be designated 90 days prior to the election so that I think that there are enough safeguards so that this bill should be passed and if there's no objection, Mr. President, I would move that it be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. The question is on transfer to the Calendar. Are there any objections?

SENATOR POWER:

Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Power.

SENATOR POWER:

I don't rise to object, but I would like to add my comments to what Senator Scalo has said. I know there is a tremendous problem in my city of Torrington because of this and it's going to be very helpful.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Are there further comments? Are there any objections? There being none, it is so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

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Yes. Calendars 295, 324 and 325 be passed temporarily. efr

MR. SPEAKER:

Is there any objection to these matters being passed temporarily? If not, it is so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Page 3 of your Calendar, Calender No. 338, File No. 200, Substitute H.B. 5722, an Act allowing the choice of a polling place in an adjacent voting district in cases of hardship to voters. Favorable...

MR. SPEAKER:

Please give your attention to the lady from the 69th.

THE CLERK:

Favorable report of the Committee on Elections.

ELOISE B. GREEN:

Mr. Speaker, thank you. I move for acceptance and passage of the Joint Committee's favorable report.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question's on acceptance and passage. Will you remark?

ELOISE B. GREEN:

Yes, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk has an amendment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Clerk will read the amendment.

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "A", offered by Representative Green, of the 69th District. L.C.O. No. 2901. In line

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15, after the word "election" delete the period and insert a comma and the following words "or primary." efr

MR. SPEAKER:

Question's on the adoption of the amendment.

ELOISE B. GREEN:

Mr. Speaker, this is strictly a typographical error that was intended to be in the bill. It just corrects a typographical error. And now I would like to yield to Representative Vaill. Oh, I asked for passage of the amendment.

MR. SPEAKER:

Question's on adoption of the amendment. Are there any further remarks? If not, all those in favor of the adoption of the amendment signify by saying "aye". Opposed. The amendment's adopted.

ELOISE B. GREEN:

And now if I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to yield to Representative Vaill. The Speaker will rule the amendment technical.

GORDON M. VAILL:

Mr. Speaker, after Reapportionment, we found some of the areas in some of the Districts are hardship to voters for getting to the polls. In the City of Torrington, we found one area of a District without a public building for a polling place...where voters had to drive ten to twelve miles to get to a polling place. In this bill allows another polling place to cross the District line for people outside of their District.

MR. SPEAKER:

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Are there any further remarks? efr

SARAH F. CURTIS:

Mr. Speaker, I want to register my approval of this bill, also. My town of Newtown has been cut up into two Senatorial Districts and two Congressional Districts and one Legislative area. This bill affects my town, and I would certainly hope that the General Assembly will go ahead and vote for it. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks?

JOSEPH R. FUSE:

Mr. Speaker, Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Speaking in favor of this bill, this will eliminate a hardship that has been created in my particular District, and I certainly urge passage of this bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks? The Clerk informs me that there is an amendment being submitted by Representative Bard, from the 138th.

THE CLERK:

House Amendment Schedule "B", offered by Representative Bard. Would you like me to read the amendment, sir?

E. RONALD BARD:

Please.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Clerk will read the amendment.

THE CLERK:

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This is L.C.O. No. 1663. In line 28, after "see" and efr before the word "when" insert an opening bracket. Line line 36, after the period insert a closing bracket.

E. RONALD BARD:

Mr. Speaker, ...

GORDON M. VAILL:

Mr. Speaker, we don't have a line 38 in the bill...in the file.

THE CLERK:

I'm sorry. There's an error. This is on Bill 5772, instead of 5722. It's on the wrong bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Clerk's in error. We will now act...

WILLIAM R. RATCHFORD:

Mr. Speaker, a question, through you, if I might, to the proponent of the bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Please state your question.

WILLIAM R. RATCHFORD:

Referring specifically to lines 9 and 10, which give a Registrar the authority to designate a suitable polling place in a Voting District adjacent thereto. I recall a discussion of this bill last year, and the question came up then, and I'll raise it now. Is there any limitation on a Registrar designating a polling place other than in his or her particular town? I don't find that limitation in the bill itself.

MR. SPEAKER:

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The gentleman of the 64th care to respond? efr

GORDON M. VAILL:

I'm not sure if I understand the question, but it does allow...

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair would ask you to give your attention to the gentleman of the 64th. Will the people in the aisles please go to the outside the Chamber or the rear of the Chamber. There's too much noise.

GORDON M. VAILL:

The Registrar only has the authority in the town they are a Registrar in, and it does specify as close to the adjacent District as possible.

WILLIAM R. RATCHFORD:

Well, further, Mr. Speaker, there are cases where within a community, for example, with Assembly Districts, or State Senate Districts, where there's more than one district, and those districts, in some cases, extend beyond the lines of a municipality, and I certainly understand the intent of the gentleman, but would point out that this legislation does not, in any way, restrict the Registrar from placing that polling place in a district at least a portion of which is no longer even in the community, and I think, in drafting Election Laws, we ought to be specific and precise, and I don't see that limitation in this bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks?

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WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

efr

Mr. Speaker, a question to the proponent of the bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Please state your question.

WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

Would this allow the Registrar to create more than one polling place? ...in a (inaudible) voting district?

MR. SPEAKER:

Gentleman of the 64th care to respond?

GORDON M. VAILL:

Through you, Mr. Speaker, will he repeat the question, please?

WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

Would this allow the Registrars to create more than one polling place within a district...within a voting district? ...where there was previously only one?

GORDON M. VAILL:

Yes.

WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

Okay.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks? If not, then the question's on the adoption...acceptance and passage of the bill as amended by House Amendment "A". I'll ask the Clerk to announce a roll call vote.

WILLIAM A. BEVACQUA:

Mr. Speaker, may it be recorded in the Journal that

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Representative Holdsworth, of the 123rd District, is absent efr
from the Assembly because of illness, please.

MR. SPEAKER:

The Clerk will so note that the gentleman of the
123rd is absent because of illness. Will all Members take
their seats...the aisles be cleared...all non-Members return
to the well of the House.

JAMES J. KENNELLY:

Mr. Speaker, rising in opposition to the bill as
amended by House "A", I would note that the terms of this bill
give the Registrars of Voters a blank check, if you will, un-
duly broad digression in deciding...

MR. SPEAKER:

Give your attention to the gentleman of the 1st.

JAMES J. KENNELLY:

...in deciding where there's been a failure of a
suitable polling place within the district where the electors
reside. There's absolutely no check on the part of any other
local official as to the exercise of this judgement. There is
no restraint, really, in the terms of the bill in the context
of how far away, or how far removed from the district wherein
those individuals reside, the new polling place can be lo-
cated, and I'm very concerned about this bill. It seems to me
that it would be more appropriate if notwithstanding the fact
that the facility might be lacking in certain respects, I think
it's rather fundamental that electors vote within the district
wherein they reside. I'm opposed to the bill.

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THOMAS M. KABLICK:

efr

Mr. Speaker, I speak in favor of the bill, because I recall a specific instance in my own district where, due to the configurations of the enumeration districts in the remap, there was no place in the district, in this particular portion of it, where they could have a polling place, and they ended up in a trailer. The people had to go through mud covered with planks into this trailer, and there were elderly people, and you couldn't believe it. The ironic thing was that less than a tenth of a mile away there was a nice, dry, accessible school, but we couldn't use it, and this is the kind of thing that this bill will take care of.

SARAH F. CURTIS:

Mr. Speaker, speaking for the second time, I happen to be in one of those districts that...can't hear!

MR. SPEAKER:

The lady from the 106th is contributing important information. Please give her your attention.

SARAH F. CURTIS:

Well, I hope it's very important as far as I'm concerned, because I happen to be in one of those districts that was so divided in Reapportionment, that I do need to have an area where the voters can go and vote for me next time.

MR. SPEAKER:

Any further remarks? If not, will all Members take their seats...the aisles be cleared...non-Members return to the well of the House. Sheriff Bingham, would you discharge your

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able assistant for a moment? The machine will be opened. efr

NATALIE RAPOPORT:

Mr. Speaker, when this bill came before us in Committee, there was a great deal of conversation concerning the possibilities of infringement, and yet there were reasons to have this bill before us. We felt that many individuals in the areas that were complaining about the inability to vote required hearing. They found no way to get to the area in time. The polls were closed for many of them by the time they found places to park in the district, after having drive twelve miles to get to vote. If the difficulty is in the language, perhaps this bill could be passed temporarily to clear up a language difficulty, but to vote upon it without giving this priority to those individuals who are suffering terribly from the non-ability to vote in their district, I think would be truly bad policy by the House. Would the Chairman consider passing this bill temporarily?

MR. SPEAKER:

Motion to pass the bill temporarily. Is there any objection?

ELOISE B. GREEN:

Mr. Speaker, I object. This bill's been in our file for quite a while. It's been gone over with a fine-tooth comb as recently as yesterday by Molly Toro, and I am sure that there's nothing wrong with the reading of the bill. I would object to pass retaining.

MR. SPEAKER:

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The lady asked to pass it temporarily.

efr

NATALIE RAPOPORT:

Not pass retaining...pass temporarily.

MR. SPEAKER:

Pass temporarily.

ELOISE B. GREEN:

I would just as soon take a vote on the bill right now. I would so move.

NATALIE RAPOPORT:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Is the lady pressing for a motion to pass temporarily?

NATALIE RAPOPORT:

No, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks? If not, will all Members take their seats.

WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

Mr. Speaker, a question to the proponent. It's a very laudable bill, but I see one problem in it in the fact that during the past election after Reapportionment, many people did not know where to vote, and I don't see anything in this bill requiring the Registrar to notify the people the change of their voting district. I think that there should be an amendment to the bill requiring that the Registrar notify these people of the change, considering the past problems.

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MR. SPEAKER:

efr

Are there any further remarks?

ELOISE B. GREEN:

There's requirement for publication in the newspaper having the largest circulation in the town of a change of a polling place.

WILLIAM J. SCULLY, JR.:

Mr. Speaker, during the last election, we had the same requirement that they be posted in the newspaper, and we had just loads and loads of people trying to vote in the wrong polling place. It is insufficient to notify them in the newspaper. People do not see those notices. I think that each voter should receive a letter notifying them, especially because there is the possibility that people will be voting not only out of their district, but possibly out of their own town. I think this requirement is necessary to make this an effective bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Are there any further remarks? The gentleman from the 64th, speaking for the second time.

GORDON M. VAILL:

Mr. Speaker, at the hearing before the Elections Committee, the towns affected by this bill all stated that they did send cards out to each and every voter in the district, because of the uncertainty of a polling place from year to year, because of no public buildings in the area, and this is done right now.

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ANTHONY D. TRUGLIA:

efr

Mr. Speaker, thank you. If I may, a question to the proponent of the bill.

MR. SPEAKER:

Please state your question.

ANTHONY D. TRUGLIA:

How does one define "hardship"?

MR. SPEAKER:

The Chair would ask that you please be quiet. There's difficult in hearing the speakers. I'm sure that there's difficulty...you listening to the debate.

ANTHONY D. TRUGLIA:

How does one define "hardship" in terms of this bill? I'd like an explanation, if possible.

MR. SPEAKER:

The gentleman of the 64th care to respond?

GORDON M. VAILL:

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is determined by the Registrars, and in most cases it's an hour-and-a-half to vote ...a drive of ten to twelve miles...things such as this have determined hardships in the past.

ANTHONY D. TRUGLIA:

In other words...I'm sorry. Through you, Mr. Speaker, in other words, in each town it's up to the Registrars to determine the hardship?

GORDON M. VAILL:

Yes.

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ANTHONY D. TRUGLIA:

efr

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER:

Any further remarks? Will all Members take their seats...the aisles be cleared...non-Members return to the well of the House. The machine will be opened. Non-Members return to the well of the House. The machine will be closed, and the Clerk will take a tally. The gentleman from the 87th would like to be recorded in the affirmative. The Clerk will so note. The Clerk will announce the tally.

The following is the result of the vote:

Total number voting	134
Necessary for passage	68
Those voting Yea	115
Those voting Nay	19
Those absent and not voting	17

MR. SPEAKER:

Joint Committee's favorable report is accepted, and the bill is passed, as amended by House Amendment "A".

THE CLERK:

Returning to a matter just passed temporarily...on Page 3, Calendar No. 325, File 201, H.B. 5173, an Act concerning grants to numicipal or regional authorities for improvement of waste disposal facilities. Favorable report of the Committee on The Environment.

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LEONARD DUBE, U.A.W.: Madame Chairwoman, Members of the Committee, my name is Leonard Dube and I'm President of Connecticut State United Auto Workers Community Action Program Council. I am here today to support the proposal for limitations on campaign contributions and campaign expenditures. Our members want campaign reform and they are pleased that yesterday, Bill No. 23, sharing the campaign period, was passed in the Senate unanimously. We are hopeful that we are on the way toward true election reform in our state. We feel that the monetary figures given in both proposals for limiting contributions and expenditures are reasonable, but let's be honest with ourselves, we really don't know what figures to use because so much was hidden in the past. Contrary to what some persons believe, our organization U.A.W. only makes minimal contributions to state candidates. The majority of our budget for political activities is used to educate our members. There are a few points, however, which we would like to raise with the Committee with regard to proposals before us. In Section 1, Bill #s 298 and 401, with the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor running as a team effort, should the word "total" be included so as to avoid confusion. Also, is the definition of "individual", and we're now talking about campaign contributions, intended to mean one individual or one person in the sense of representing an organization? We feel that this should be clarified. Finally, we would ask that there would be penalties for violation. We commend the Elections Committee for directing its approach toward election reform and we feel that these proposals are geared towards that goal. Madame Chairwoman, at this point I would also like to comment briefly on Bill No. 5722. I realize that our registrars and deputies are here from Torrington, but I happen to be one of the unfortunate ones living in Torrington who had to travel 12 miles in order to vote last time around, and in my travels I passed the three voting places. I can understand the problem as I happen to be part of this problem. I would encourage this Committee to pay special attention to the Representative from Torrington and would urge a favorable report on these proposals. Thank you.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Are there any questions? Thank you.

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STEVE WISENSALE:

- 3) And finally, this committee should maintain its commitment to the basic concept involved and make certain that a clear line of demarcation be drawn between a political ideal on one hand and a mathematical problem on the other. It would indeed be unfortunate if these bills were defeated in a mathematical debate rather than a political debate.

The fact of the matter is that if those in power fail to bring about the necessary election reform now, they will only reinforce the attitudes and beliefs of many people that politicians are insensitive and deaf to the needs of the American people. ConnPIRG calls for election reform now.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you very much Steven.

AUDREY HUBBARD: (Testimony inaudible) but believe she asked to refer to the Clerk of the Town of Torrington.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Alright. Mary Diulio.

MARY DIULIO: Yes, my name is Mary Diulio and I am the Deputy Registrar from the Town of Torrington. 5722
Actually we're not prepared today to make any statement as we came today to witness the hearing. Actually, we have a situation in Torrington whereby people were very unhappy and where the complaints were coming in, and are still coming in, regarding the unhappiness of voters with their polling places. We do have a way of changing this if the polling place could be not within the district. If I could just show you on the map. We have this whole area here which is 648, where all the people had to go clear across town and vote at the Torrington Church as it was the only place we had at the time which was suitable for voting. Now, we have a polling place right below this blue line which is the West Torrington Grange and the people at this end, divided here, could have voted here. They would have just had to go across the street (although it's just beyond the boundary)-- it's right across the street. Then we had another situ-

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MARY DIULIO: (cont'd.) ation down here. As Mr. Dube pointed out, he lives in this area and he had to go all the way over here to this polling place. So we're actually here just to help the voter. We're not here to make changes in polling places but we certainly don't want to make things more inconvenient for the voter. All we want to do is to make things more convenient for them. Now if this bill is passed, we could do this with this area here and these people from here could come right to the Armory, which is right along this red line.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: That was going to be my question. It looked for a while as though you were going to have two districts voting (inaudible).

MARY DIULIO: No, No.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Okay, I see.

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: Madame Chairwoman, I'd like to ask a question. One thing disturbs me about this and maybe because it could leave a great deal of opening. On line 25 where "a (inaudible) can designate a suitable polling place in a voting district adjacent thereto," the word "adjacent" can mean many things and especially if you define "adjacent" as meaning in a place adjacent to but not in the closest available area in that adjacent district. So if 64-8A was something close to 64-30 here, by the same rules that you have, this would be justification for having the polling place here. (previous sentence was inaudible and so could contain errors).

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: No, No.

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: So perhaps you should have the phrase "adjacent only" and not "closest adjacent place".

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: You can rest assured, Representative Rapoport, that I don't think any Registrar or voter would last too long in their office if they made it too inconvenient for the voters. What we're trying to do is to make it as easy as possible. Now,

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REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: (cont'd.) since the last election we have acquired two temporary voting places for the next election. However, what we are afraid of is that in the very near future these places of business might expand and ask us to leave. Therefore, we would have to go through this whole rig-a-ma-role again and the people are going to be very upset if they are bombarded with changes. Therefore, if we can make it as convenient as possible and use the public places, so that we don't have to worry about relocation, then we won't have any problems. People will then know that they can vote in that particular place for the next ten years until reapportionment comes up again.

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: (inaudible but she seems to be asking another question)

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: Yes, yes we do. In fact, we might as we're talking about using one of our churches and possibly one of our social clubs. We'd also like to use these for voting places.

REPRESENTATIVE VAILL: Do you rent any of your polling places?

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: Yes we do. The church...

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: So you're not looking to limit yourself to just public places?

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: No, No.

MARY DIULIO: We're trying to restrict ourselves to more adequate places so that we won't have to move the voters around. The new district that Rep. Bonetti just spoke about is a former restaurant called the Hemlocks in Torrington on the northwest road. Now, next year this man may decide to sell so that we'd have to change the polling place again.

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: The only thing with limiting ourselves primarily to public places, Rep. Badolato, is that once we're there, we're there.

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REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: (cont'd.) We don't want to limit ourselves to just public places, but with a city-owned building I'm sure that the Mayor would cooperate in letting us use it.

REPRESENTATIVE VAILL: I think what Representative Badolato is trying to say, and I agree, is that in order to have an adequate polling place, and a convenient polling place, you have to not limit it to just a public place but a place that has adequate parking, so that when the voters park their cars, they still don't have to walk half-a-mile to get there.

MARY DIULIO: This is a situation that we had last year. We had to park way down and it was dark; the street wasn't lighted properly; it really was very dangerous. We really thought that we were going to have a catastrophe.

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: To answer Representative Badolato, we had a polling place at a church last year. It was a horrible place - dark, no adequate parking at all, and the lines were unbearably long. In fact, some people got so disgusted that they didn't even vote. I truly felt sorry for both of our registrars, Mrs. McCloud, the Voting Registrar, and Mrs. Diulio, for the tremendous blame that they received for the lack of polling places, whereas they really hadn't had much control over this matter.

MARY DIULIO: Actually, we had used that polling place two years ago and we didn't have that difficulty although the voting was much heavier. We did have some questions, too, on our machine, which meant that it took people a longer time to vote. We also had 17 candidates so that this created quite a large problem.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: I don't know what you mean by a lack of parking. One of the districts in my community has approximately 6,000 voters and the only place that they have to park is on the street, right in front of the voting place. We don't provide the voters with parking... They're in and out of the building, but when there's a parking area, what you're concerned with is that they have to have adequate parking.

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REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: Well, all we're talking about here is adequate safety for the voters because in this particular area it's very dark; it's on a state highway, and it's in bad shape, with cars coming up and down.

MARY DIULIO: Because of the congestion at the polls, the voters had to park at least half-a-mile away.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: What do you do at the present time to notify the public of a change in the polling place?

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: We send out a postcard to each individual voter as to where they should vote.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: Why then in Line 31 do you simply ask that they publish in a newspaper having circulation in the town.

MARY DIULIO: Well, we do this in Torrington but we don't know if other towns send cards out, although we do.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: In addition to publishing in the newspaper, you also send cards?

MARY DIULIO: Yes, in addition to publishing in the paper.

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: The part about publishing in a paper having circulation in the town was stipulated by the Elections Commissioner.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: Well, this doesn't mean that he's right. We have three newspapers that circulate in New Britain. However, having circulation doesn't necessarily mean that you'll get coverage. In other words, "having circulation" can mean any one of the newspapers. In our town, we have two newspapers that have a combined circulation of about 5,000 and another one having a circulation of 32,000. So under the present rule, the new polling place could be published in a newspaper that has a small circulation and a major part of the public would not be aware of it.

MARY DIULIO: May I just say ad hoc to the representative that if we ever changed the polling place, even before re-districting, we have always had it in the newspaper, plus sending each individual voter a card. It's a

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MARY DIULIO: (cont'd.) tremendous expense and an awful lot of work but we have done this even though we have 18,000 voters in Torrington. Still, even with people getting cards, some are confused.

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: Representative Badolato, I don't think we would have any problems if we decided to change a few words back here where you were talking about the use of the word "circulation".

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: What do you think would happen if the two registrars could not agree?

REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: I really don't know as our registrars have agreed and cooperated 100%. However, perhaps you could include Town and City Clerk in this or possibly you could suggest your governing body. (rest inaudible)

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: In the written approval of the registration of your municipality, some municipalities have more than three registrars, so that you have to have a combined vote of all the registrars, and should there be disagreement among the registrars, you might never get anywhere.

MARY DIULIO: I just feel that any registrar certainly would want to make things convenient for the voter and since they have to accept the full responsibility for an election, I think that they should have something to say as to where the polling place should be.

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: I understand. We're not questioning the fact that many registrars are unbiased and unprejudiced. However, sometimes they might be subject to pressures, depending on the voters of the district and their affiliated parties. But with a law of this nature, it would cover the state, which might leave us open for (rest inaudible).

MARY DIULIO: If the registrars cannot agree, I'm sure that the governing body could step in. However, I think that the registrars should be given the first chance to get things straightened out. The first draft of this bill was quite more comprehensive than this. It had the legislative body of the town included and it just seems that there are provisions for cases where the registrars are not in agreement. (some inaudible speaking here by several people)

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REPRESENTATIVE BONETTI: Any more questions?
Thank you very much.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Thank you.

JEAN HUBBLE: My name is Jean Hubble, Registrar of Voters in Newtown. With me are Susan Fernandez, Registrar of Voters in Newtown and Harvey Hubble, Deputy Registrar of Voters in Newtown. We are representing our Board of Registrars, our First Selectman, our Town Clerk, and our respective Town Committee. We are all in agreement with Bill No. 5722 allowing the choice of polling place in an adjacent voting district in cases of hardship to the voters. With redistricting of the Congressional and Senatorial districts, Newtown is placed in a very bad situation. We've had two voting districts in the municipality for nearly 150 years and suddenly we were found split five ways. We also at the time were electing two Registrars of Voters for each polling place, which created quite a problem. The Town is also undergoing a charter revision change. The revision approved of the election of two Registrar of Voters at large so that eliminated one problem - we did not have to elect additional registrars for each voting district. This then allowed us to have three permanent voting districts, completely in agreement with the Senatorial and Congressional guidelines. But during this, it also put one district, District 3, in a part of town where there is nothing but homes. There is not a school, not a church, not even a gas station - there's nothing there but homes. So we found ourselves in great difficulty. We used, and have used for years, two schools for polling places. We have directly across the street, in the middle of District 3, the Newtown Highschool. We could use the foyer of the Highschool with no problems at all. The convenience to the voter would be greatly improved. We, at the last Presidential Election, convinced the owners of a brand new convalescent home to use their community room, which is very small - not even one quarter of the size of this room. We had to put three voting machines in there, plus the checkers' table, the moderator, the absentee ballot counter, 11,060 voters coming into that room. It was almost impossible for the voters to get in after the workers were in. You couldn't tell whether they were going to one machine or the other and we had quite a few difficulties. We had complaint upon complaint,

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JEAN HUBBLE: (cont'd.) as people couldn't find the convalescent home as it is located in the back end of this district, in a very quiet section, down a long driveway. We had a police officer posted at the top of the road in hopes that the voters would know which driveway to turn down. We had a policeman down inside the parking area as it was not an adequate parking area and it was a long distance down from the main road, which is a very bad road. Ever since that election, we have tried to work this out and this was the best thing that we could come up with. Now in speaking, we are talking about the amendment and would like the amendment, commencing at Line 5 in your Elections Law Book, Section 9-169, because it is at this point that it says that "the registrar of voters of any municipality taking such action shall provide a suitable polling place in each district, but if the registrars fail to agree as to the location of any polling place or places, the legislative body shall determine the location thereof." We are perfectly in agreement with this part of the amendment and we feel that this part could solve any problems that might arise. But we do want this amendment put in there. We're not asking to go within the district. We went out yesterday and we clocked it. The mileage on the outside of the district, and I didn't bring a map, on the very outside of this district up to what is the polling place of Buckingham Garden, the people are driving 9-1/2 miles to any of these parts (and remember in Newtown we only have two or three main roads, everything comes out of (inaudible) Road, it's a little town), and they have great difficulty. I-84 went right through the district also, so that they couldn't even get off of the regular roads. They had to go way to the end of the highway and come all the way back. Thus, the majority of people were traveling 18 miles, round trip, to get to their polling place. We feel that this makes it simpler and quicker for the voter and I think that this is what we have to work for - the convenience of the voter in getting to the polls. Also, if we can use the Newtown Highschool, it isn't in District 1 but it isn't used as a polling place for District 1, this would become the permanent polling place. Then when a primary is held, as well as an election, the voters would know exactly where they are to vote. We have people now who walk up to us and ask us where they are supposed to vote now, as for the Presidential Election we voted one place and for the Municipal Elections we voted in another place. Now, we did send out postcards

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JEAN HUBBLE: (cont'd.) and we had notices in the newspaper, so that they did know where they were supposed to go to the polls, but the voters did object to going out of their way.

Susan, is there anything you wish to say.

SUSAN FERNANDEZ: I don't think that I really have anything further to add. You've done a very good job, as usual. I do think that the present system has created an awful hardship on our voters in this particular section of our town. The rest of the town was fine, but in this one area we had quite numerous complaints, and even though we had mailed out postcards to every voter before the election telling them where they were to vote, the phone calls about where they were to vote were much greater from that particular area than the rest. The other voters seemed to be more aware because they were voting in a public building and one that was more centralized than the one in Buckingham Gardens. Whether that just slipped their minds when they received the cards, or what, I don't know. But it just seems that these were the people who could not find their polling place.

JEAN HUBBLE: Many, in fact, did not know where Buckingham Gardens was located. So we had to put an additional map in the paper, although we had already put an ad in the paper telling them where Buckingham Gardens was located, explaining where it was. So this created a problem. And many of these people, particularly those over by I-84 (this area is bounded by I-84, by Toddy Hill, by Southbury, and off of the (inaudible) River over to Monroe - this is a crazy area as it goes around one whole part of the town), these people were going to their former polling place, the Highschool, until they finally found their way up and they couldn't understand why this situation existed. So this is why we are here today.

SUSAN FERNANDEZ: And the only polling place that we had in that district was Buckingham Gardens which would hold even as many as it did. We had nothing else.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: I must admit that I never heard of Buckingham Gardens.

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JEAN HUBBLE: We had a meeting in Buckingham Gardens yesterday, through another organization, and we all got in there. One of the women said, "I couldn't find this place. I never heard of Buckingham Gardens so I went to Lexington Gardens, which is a greenhouse." Thus, I can see that this is going to be the next problem - we'll be getting more people going to Lexington Gardens and they'll never find this polling place.

REPRESENTATIVE RAPOPORT: Did you find that because of these difficulties many of the voters did not vote at all?

JEAN HUBBLE: Yes, we did. We had people calling us. In fact, our first phone call came at 6:45 and the woman said, "I don't have to go to Buckingham Gardens, do I?", and I said, "Yes, I'm sorry you do." She then said, "Who did this. I'll never vote for you people again!!" Picking up the flack on this, we said that it really wasn't that great an inconvenience but that if she wished, we would send out a driver. She then hung up. As the Park and Recreation people were in our office at that time, this was going to be our response. As you know, it is not the registrar's responsibility to bring people into the polls. So we found ourselves in a very difficult position that day.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Any other questions? Then this reference to 9-169, do you approve of the bill as it's drafted?

JEAN HUBBLE: Yes, I would approve of this bill as it's drafted. I would say that there is one thing...

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, in Line 25 there is a typographical error.

JEAN HUBBLE: Yes, but there's also an inconsistency, well maybe it's not an inconsistency, but it says, "such written opinion or designation shall be received by the Town Clerk not later than 90 days before regular elections." But if you look to Line 8 of your Election Law, it says, "Polling places to be used in an election shall be determined at least 31 days before such an election; such polling places shall not be changed within the said period of 31 days." So what I'm assuming is that all of this other work must be done in 90 days, and definitely within 31 days, and that it certainly cannot be changed. So that there is a slight inconsistency here if you look. Other than that fact going back to your former law, or your present law, as I think your think your former is the present, it stipulates that

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JEAN HUBBLE: (cont'd.) "polling places to be used in an election shall be determined at least 31 days." It's Section 9-169 and it's Line 8.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes, there is one line there. Are there any more questions?

REPRESENTATIVE VAILL OR HARVEY HUBBLE: (unclear who it was) Yes, I would like to say one thing further on this particular Bill No. 5722. It may be a small district and it may have nothing but homes in it, but our representative, who was not able to be here today and asked us to speak for her, said that she would prefer to vote in the Highschool, and she should be quoted on that. I've also spoken with Senator Bozzuto, whose District is the 32nd, and he said that he'd be in favor but unfortunately he was unable to be here. I think that basically we're talking about a hardship which is imposed upon a community, either through the legislature or through the courts. If your municipal lines are drawn to coincide with this change, then we require this kind of relief. However, if the redistricting providing a no-polling place is created by the action of the municipality, then I don't think that there is reason for this type of relief. The municipality really ought to be able to take care of itself. The hardship comes about when, through the peculiarities of fate and census tracts and things that really probably aren't the proper way to represent people, lines are capriciously drawn through communities and leave us in this type of situation. Thank you.

JEAN HUBBLE: We would also like to speak to Bill No. 297.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: May I address myself to one section on the last bill?

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Yes.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: On the inconsistency between the 90 and 30 days, would it not be better to have the 30 days where some polling places are private establishments and therefore might have to require that period of time to acquire before election.

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JEAN HUBBLE: Yes, I can see where if we insert all of this prior to that Line 8, so that it says "the polling places shall be determined at least 31 days"; where we had written here a new law, you had written a new law stating "such written opinion and designation shall be received by the Town Clerk not later than 90 days before regular election." I can go along and see where you have two spots - then, if there is no objection, you can use this in public. But definitely by 30 days it should be a well-known fact, because if we only had to write it 30 days before, out voters would never know where they were going because it would be almost an impossibility to type up that many postcards to the people. I mean, it is not something that you can do in a bulk mailing because they have to go to only certain designated people.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN: Then you approve of letting Bill No. 298 say in there?

JEAN HUBBLE: Yes. I would leave it in there if it came ahead of this. I think it should be left in. But we're just pointing out there is a slight inconsistency. We can understand why, however, if that was your intent to have it written as designated at 31 days. And I can understand you're ... What you're saying here is that a polling place within a district is the 30 days. What you're saying in this one is that if it was outside the polling place, they should give 90 days notice. And I can agree with this. So we shouldn't change this. I suggest that at the risk of slight confusion, we not change it. But will these other people understand it? We find that election laws are fine for us to understand but not the average person who picks up and reads them in the middle of a paragraph and says do this.

REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: What...what you're saying is that this will only happen once every ten years, when there is a change in the redistrict line because of reapportionment which is required by constitutional law.

JEAN HUBBLE: I would hope that it would not have to keep happening even every ten years.

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REPRESENTATIVE BADOLATO: Well the possibility is ...
(rest inaudible)

JEAN HUBBLE: That's right ... that's right. This bill would allow in ten years, if reapportionment comes through and breaks up all the seven districts, the registrar to go ahead and straighten them out without having to wait for the Legislature to come back and go into session and wait for the town because we didn't have the time the last time. Now are we through all the questions on our 5722 Bill? We would also speak in favor of Bill No. 297. I feel very strongly about this in so far as our absentee balloting is concerned. We have not had problems with absentee ballots in this town because this has been a "small-roll" town. But we are growing, growing very fast, and there is a lot of building going on in Newtown, so that it was one thing when we knew people and knew what was going on. But it is getting out of our realm where we recognize every name and so forth. This can be very difficult so that we are still very much in favor of this bill.. Also, Bill No. 5553. This would be Public Disclosure of the Absentee Ballot Application. I feel very strongly that these applications should not be public knowledge to just anyone and everyone that walks into the Town Clerk's Office and asks to see them. I feel that these should be put into a notebook and put away in the files; but obviously the people who have received an absentee ballot application, that could be public knowledge because the reasons would not be so listed. Many people receive an application and file for a ballot who are errors on files, and we have a large number of them, because we cannot pull them out the morning of an election if they are within the town; but many leave very early the morning of an election so obviously they could not vote. You also have people, particularly in the November elections and the elections that come along in the Winter, that go away to Florida or other points south, and this would be open knowledge to people that these houses are vacant. Also, we have found that many of the people, who are older people, are not able to go out and go to the polls, nor are they able to go out any place else. This is again open information to someone who realizes that this is an elderly person who cannot get out and this is a place we can go and break in. There is a lot of this going on now and I think that we should be very very cautious. I do not feel that these