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**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

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SECRETARY OF THE STATE DENISE MERRILL: Good morning. Chairman Morin, members of the committee, I would like to briefly address -- I think it's about six of the bills before the Committee this morning. And I know you have my written testimony, but I will read it just because some of these provisions are a little complicated.

So we'll start with Raised Bill 212, An Act Concerning Provisional Ballots for State and Municipal Elections. This bill would allow provisional ballots to be used in state and municipal elections, and this is our proposal from my office.

Currently, provisional ballots are available in Federal elections for voters who are registered but for some reason their name is not on the registry list for their polling place or town.

And let me just stop and say this happens fairly frequently. In fact, if I were to cite one of the biggest problems with our voting system, it is not all the -- you hear a lot of different concerns. It's really errors that occur for various reasons, mostly human error of some sort. You know, someone can't read the handwriting on the card. Mostly it's not the registrar's fault; mostly voters get confused about where they're supposed to be. Maybe their polling place changed and so forth.

When you vote by provisional ballot, you're only casting votes for Federal candidates. This we allow now just for Federal elections. So essentially, this bill will allow a provisional ballot to look like the regular ballot being used, because it will include all the candidates running for office in that election, as opposed to just the Federal candidates.

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Most towns do have Internet access. There are a few that don't. So I support this bill and urge passage.

Raised Bill 214, An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status for the Permanently Disabled.

This bill would make absentee ballot status permanent for the permanently physically disabled and clarify instructions for a recipient of such status. It corrects one aspect of a bill to address the issue that was acted upon last year.

In 2011 lawmakers enacted a bill that would provide continuous absentee ballot applications to those who qualify for permanent absentee ballot status. But this still presents a bit of a burden on the permanently physically disabled because the new bill will continuously supply the permanently physically disabled with an absentee ballot, as opposed to an application that you need to fill out all the time. This way you'd be on a list that would be permanently physically disabled and you wouldn't have to keep reapplying.

This makes a lot of sense. It certainly embodies the spirit of what we were trying to accomplish last year, and I would just give a shout out to Representative Nafis, who worked very hard on this concept, and I support the bill. I think it's a good idea and does streamline what we started last year.

Raised Bill 218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries.

This will look familiar. We have had this issue come up a number of times over the past few

years, and I am supporting the bill. The bill would permit small towns, under 20,000 in population, to reduce the number of polling places for primaries.

This is a cost saving measure, pretty clearly, although probably about half the towns in the State only have one polling place, because they're so small. But there are a number of other towns -- I think it's kind of in the midrange -- that this would help.

Sometimes you just have a much smaller voter turnout for a primary than for a general election and such a town may not need the staff and run as many polling places for a primary as they do a general. Reducing the number of polling places would definitely save towns money and in general we support the idea.

Appropriately, though, this bill addresses the issue that came up when we tried to pass this several years ago, actually when I was still the Majority Leader. The issues were how do you notify voters of the change in polling place because, frankly, whenever you change polling places, even if it's, you know, for a very good reason, there is a certain amount of voter confusion that happens. And that's my concern.

I think it's mostly a concern in larger cities, where neighborhood polling places are important. People still go there by foot. So I think eliminating a polling place in a city neighborhood can create voter confusion, place a hardship on a voter who doesn't have a car or if he or she wants to exercise their right to vote.

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And there were, frankly, some concerns about undue political influence in the big cities, where a primary is the major election. And if certain primary precincts are considered the base of one candidate or another and they get eliminated, you know, there is concern about the politics of all this.

So I think this compromise makes sense. I don't know how the 20,000 number was arrived at, but, you know, in concept it makes a lot of sense.

Then there's Raised Bill 5250, An Act Concerning the Appointment of Primary Polling Officials. This bill would provide that an enrolled party member in the State, rather than just an enrolled party member in the municipality may serve as a primary polling place official.

This simply addresses the fact of life that it's getting harder and harder to find polling place workers and this simply allows, in a primary, any enrolled party member from other towns could also serve as a poll worker in a primary of their own party in a town.

We think it makes sense; it conforms primary to what's already done in general elections. So I would support that bill.

So, with that, I would be happy to answer question or address other concerns.

REP. MORIN: Thank you, Madam Secretary. I appreciate your input. In Senate Bill 213, you talk about -- that's the one with Internet access for registrars?

SECRETARY OF THE STATE DENISE MERRILL: Right.

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REP. HETHERINGTON: All right. Thank you very much.

REP. MORIN: Thank you very much for testifying.

MELISSA RUSSELL: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Senate Bill 214. I understand Essie Labrot wants to speak on this one.

Good morning.

ESSIE LABROT: Good morning, Senator Slossberg, Representative Morin and the distinguished members of the GAE committee. My name is Essie Labrot and I'm testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerks' Association. I am also the vice chair of the legislative committee for the Town Clerks Association and the Town Clerk of West Hartford.

I'm here to testify in support of Senate Bill 214, An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status for the Permanently Disabled. And we have supported this legislation -- similar legislation in the past, and we're very pleased to do so this time with the changes that were mentioned, specifically that a ballot will be sent to each -- to each person instead of just the application.

We believe that this legislation will offer some assistance and ease the voting for those who regularly require an absentee ballot due to a disability.

In addition, we also support Senate Bill 218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries. The legislation would permit small towns the option to reduce the number of polling places for a primary election. This legislation will

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permit municipalities to save money during these difficult fiscal times for towns, we believe, and our Association is however mindful of the potential for voter confusion whenever a polling place is relocated. But we understand that this would be less of an issue for towns that have populations of under 20,000.

So thank you so much. And if you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

REP. MORIN: Any questions? Thank you very much. We appreciate your testimony.

217. We have Melissa Russell. There was no request for any of the other bills between there. Hello again.

MELISSA RUSSELL: Sorry to get comfortable in there.

REP. MORIN: We can't have that.

MELISSA RUSSELL: I'm speaking today in favor of Bill 217, An Act Concerning Challengers as Polling Place Officials. This is a fairly simple thing. To eliminate the need to hire extra polling places, if the cost situation, industry mining situation.

It is important to note that any elector and any poll worker can challenge anybody's right or -- anybody's right to vote, whether or not they're in the right polling place, whether they're who they say they are. So nobody's being -- no right is being taken away by eliminating this sort of official challenger as a poll worker. This is really just to simplify and to save money. And so we would like to see this -- we would like to see this passed.

REP. MORIN: Are there any questions? Thank you.

Before, if I speak into the mike, Sue Larson presented Bill 218 -- no?

SUE LARSON: Chairman Slossberg and Chairman Morin and members of the GAE, I'm Sue Larson again, Registrar of Voters in South Windsor and representing ROVAC.

I will not read my testimony. Again, I'll just talk about the -- just my personal viewpoint. Right now it's listed as a -- for populations under 20,000. Well, I know the Town of South Windsor, whose population is about 26,000, would more than love to have this bill passed and have us included.

We have five polling places and we would love to be able to, in a primary situation, go down to two polling places, and that would -- or one polling place, and that could save the Town of South Windsor about 1,100 per primary. So we are very much in favor of the bill. We'd love to have the population go up, so that towns like South Windsor could utilize this bill.

The other thing that I would like to mention is in the bill it says, "notification by mail," and I would like to see if some form of electronic mail could be included in the bill. South Windsor has a system we call Everbridge, which notifies the residents of the Town of South Windsor for different circumstances, such as the storm that we had back in October.

And in talking to our IT people, this can also be utilized for any form of notification to our residents. So that would be a tremendous cost savings to South Windsor, if we didn't have to do it by mail every time, or at least in

circumstances where we know we can reach the voter, use it through -- use the Everbridge system. And those that we know we can't reach them, do it by mail. So we -- those are the two things that I would like to present before you.

REP. MORIN: Are there any questions? You know -- I don't know if you know, but when I was listening to the Secretary discuss that this is allowed in regular elections, general elections, and now it seems odd to me that that wouldn't be allowed in primaries, because honestly I think it makes a whole lot more sense in primaries, where there's less people voting. So --

SUE LARSON: Exactly.

REP. MORIN: -- I'm sure we're going to have to look at this, and we -- I hear your points on the 20,000. That's something that I want to look at as well.

Anyone? Thank you very much.

SUE LARSON: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Let's see who already spoke. Matt Wagner, come on back.

MATT WAGNER: I actually did that at a debate I was moderating once, put up the five second sign immediately and there's, "Oh, no."

GAE members -- Senator McLachlan, I haven't greeted you yet. I'm here to speak also on SB 218. There's two points. Actually, one is, I think, the approach requiring consensus of all the registrars is correct.

I'm the registrar of a large town, Fairfield, and I would be very reluctant to ever reduce our polling places. I think that the voter education component is -- it takes a long time to build up, and I'd sort of be reluctant to sacrifice it. But I think that's a choice a town should be able to make on their own.

And I think, you know, if people felt like I was making the wrong decision that, you know, there's an accountability mechanism. They could remove me and replace me with someone who preferred the other attitude, if they wanted to. So I do hope that you'll look at that 20,000 number.

And it's actually a population, not a voter population. But it's actually like a census population, I guess, in the bill. So it would probably be towns with -- 12,000 to 13, 000 voters would be the upper end.

I'm also -- and I spoke on this last year. One thing that became -- that I wasn't aware of until we had a referendum scheduled at the same time as a primary -- that we're actually required to have referenda, special elections and primaries in separate locations from one another, and I think that that's a situation a lot of towns will be experiencing this year, as the presidential primary falls in that window where a lot of towns are having their budget referenda.

One thing that happens is there's obviously a greater staffing requirement. There's also a requirement that we've -- after a Federal election, like a primary, that we keep our machine sealed for 14 days. And so there's an equipment availability problem, that towns may not have enough equipment to run primaries or

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special elections for referenda all on the same day, when more than one of those things occurs.

So I hope that actually you might consider adding other election events than a second primary to this ability to be merged into one polling place. We experienced it in 2010. I think you'll probably be hearing about a number of towns that face that this year. So thank you.

REP. MORIN: Any questions? Thank you very much, Matt.

MATT WAGNER: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Urana Petit. Welcome.

URANA PETIT: Good morning, Rep. Morin and members of the GAE. My name is Urana Petit and I'm from Hartford. I'm here to talk about SB 218. I'm in favor of the bill, but the population number -- I think that should be increased. Personally, I think we should look at voter population as opposed to census population.

Different census, a city like Hartford, where we have -- last presidential primary one of the parties had 400 people turn out, and this evening we're discussing a proposal to city council, where we're asking city council for \$90,000 to run a primary which only 500 people would be voting.

So it would cost the City of Hartford \$180 per voter for a primary which would only work for 500 people turning out. So I think voter population should be taken into consideration as opposed to census population. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Are there any questions?

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Urana, did you provide us with written testimony?

URANA PETIT: No, I did not. I just wanted to lend a voice to this debate.

REP. MORIN: All right. Thank you. We appreciate your coming.

URANA PETIT: You're welcome.

REP. MORIN: Is Kashina Walsh-Weaver here? I don't see her.

Karen Cortes, from the Town of Simsbury.

KAREN CORTES: Good morning, Representative Morin, Senator Slossberg, members of the committee. My name is Karen Cortes; I'm registrar of voters for the Town of Simsbury. And I'm here to testify in favor today of Senate Bill 218, which would allow us to reduce the number of polling places that we open for primaries.

This year we have two primary dates that we're going to be dealing with. I'm particularly concerned in Simsbury for the Republican presidential primary. We're going to be opening up, under existing laws, four polling locations for about 1,500 voters. Those could easily be accommodated in fewer locations.

In the summer of 2008, we had a State senate primary where we opened up the four polling locations for 840 voters. It cost an awful lot of money. And I know that there are concerns about voter confusion, changing polling locations.

During the storm in November, Simsbury was

forced, because of weather and safety concerns, to consolidate all four of our polling locations into a single polling place. We did this without the benefit of United States mail, because there was no mail service in our town.

We had no power; we had no electricity. We used signs. I mail ordered these from a company in Florida; I got them Fed Ex'd. We plastered the town. We didn't have issues with voter confusion.

We also used the Everbridge system Sue Larson had mentioned. There are simple ways to notify voters. We didn't have a single instance of someone calling our office and saying, "Where do I go? My polling location is closed." We had, even with no power in a significant portion of our town, over 35 percent turnout at our municipal election.

So I hope that you'll vote in favor of this and also, again, increase the population cutoff or base it on the number of registered voters. The 20,000 number would cut off Wethersfield, Torrington, Ridgefield, Westport, North Haven, my town. We'd really like to see this passed and without haste, so we can enjoy these savings, hopefully for the presidential primary in April as well as in the congressional and senate primaries in August. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Thank you, Karen. Are there any questions from anybody? Thank you very much.

KAREN CORTES: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Margaret DeShanko.

MARGARET DE SHANKO: I am passing.

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the -- I submitted on my testimony a paragraph relating specifically to it. But again the proper training of registrars -- the training of workers before a primary is the critical element that we're trying to maintain here and change.

If you have any questions, I'd be more than happy to answer them, this or any of the questions that are before you today.

REP. MORIN: Excellent. Any Committee members have questions? George, thank you very much for coming up.

GEORGE CODY: All right.

REP. MORIN: Luther Weeks.

LUTHER WEEKS: Chairmen, members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, executive director of Connecticut Voters Count.

I have served in three elections as a central count absentee ballot moderator. I support HB 5250, which provides for certified moderators and others to serve as official in any municipality in this State in a primary, just that they can't in elections.

I also have a suggestion for further improvement in this law and bill. The three times I served as moderator in an election were in a municipality other than my own. Because of the existing law, I have had to turn down serving in primaries.

The existing law and distinction between primaries and elections makes no sense and can make staffing difficult for registrars of voters.

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I also suggest changing the limitation on checkers, ballot clerks and machine tenders, which seem to imply that only a single checking line is necessary in a primary. In high volume primaries, especially now that towns are consolidating polling places, serving the public may demand more than a single line, often requiring more than two checkers.

Leave it to registrars of voters to determine staffing necessary to serve the public. And I've provided suggested text changes.

I also note that in several bills "registrar" is changed to "registrar of voters". For consistency and for whatever it's worth, that same change should probably be made in several places in this bill.

I also add that I support the idea of increasing those limits in SB 218. As a former sub-city area of Wethersfield, Glastonbury is probably about the same size, and we had a referendum in one polling place a couple of years ago. It was a very popular referendum. It was a little crowded but it worked fine. We survived. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Any questions? Thanks Luther. I appreciate it.

Moving on to House Bill 5251, Melissa Russell.

MELISSA RUSSELL: Hello again. This IS an act concerning transfer on voter registration. This is -- last year the Legislature did a huge overhaul of modernizing our election laws in tabulator language. You guys were so happy, but a couple of little things got sort of lost in all the melding of bills, and this is one of them.

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And that is when a voter changes their address within a municipality, the way it stands now, they have to fill out a separate, distinct form, and what we would like to see is make this consistent with the rest of our policies and have them just fill out a new registration card.

It simplifies things; it's less paper to keep track of. It's less forms for the voter to have to fill out and feel confused about. So we would like to see this corrected.

We'd also -- this particular bill applies to 9-35 but in 9-35-2 there's also a mention of a separate -- same separate form and we'd like that change to be made there as well, to have them fill out a new voter reg card. So again, it's a tiny technical fix but it does impact our polling place.

REP. MORIN: Thank you, Melissa. Any questions? Thank you again. Appreciate it.

MELISSA RUSSELL: Thank you very much.

REP. MORIN: I would say -- I see my friend Senator Boucher came in, and I know we kind of passed her by. So Senator, why don't you come up and join us.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you very much, Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin and ranking members McLachlan and Hwang, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee.

I'm here today to testify in favor of Senate Bill 218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries, and urge the Committee to consider

this bill and move it out this year. I know I've brought it up in the past.

What this bill would do is permit municipalities to use fewer polling places for a primary than for the general election.

One thing that is recognized is turnout. A difference between general elections and primary elections is just glaring. The high water mark for recent turnout was the 2008 presidential election, which garnered an impressive 78.14 percent turnout of Connecticut voters. Turnout for the 2009 August primary election was just a meager 13 percent.

Despite the disparity, our towns have to properly staff and maintain the same number of polling places. This bill would give municipalities the flexibility to adjust the number of polling places depending on need. And certainly with costs being what they are today, it's even more important.

As you know, there are potential municipal savings that could be realized through the elimination of polling locations. That includes staffing, renting the locations, the transportation of materials to each polling location and the installation of phone lines for each polling location.

In addition, some of my towns are finding it increasingly difficult to find enough poll workers to properly maintain each polling place, particularly in a very low interest election.

Although Senate Bill 218 makes much needed changes for our polling laws, I would like to suggest that the cutoff population in the bill

be raised from 20,000 residents to include towns with up to 50,000 residents, in the interest of benefitting more of our municipalities. That also takes care of the concern that we hear oftentimes about our inner cities, that they would like to keep all of their polling places open.

Again, during these difficult times, we need to extend the availability to cut costs to as many of our towns as possible, and by allowing them to operate and pay for fewer polling places for lower turnout primaries, we will be providing a small measure of financial relief that can be passed along to the taxpayer.

Thank you so much for your kind attention, and I'm here to answer any questions that you might have.

REP. MORIN: Thank you, Senator. Previous testimony has been heard and I, as well, am interested in that number that's sitting at 20. So we will be looking at that. I just want you to be aware of that.

SENATOR BOUCHER: It's certainly up to the Committee to see what they find as reasonable and best.

REP. MORIN: I appreciate your comments on that. Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER: Good morning.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Senator Meyer, a pleasure to see you.

SENATOR MEYER: Nice to see you.

Is your view affected in any way by a State Senate or State Rep district which is, in

effect, a one-party district, where the primary election is -- becomes in effect the general election?

SENATOR BOUCHER: Well, I think -- I didn't really target it for that specific reason, but generally overall just as so many of my registrar of voters come to me about their concern and complaints about the cost and the challenges of keeping all these polling places open.

Quite frankly, I really didn't think about whether it was a one-party town or, you know, a very competitive community, so much as the concern amongst the registrar of voters in my general region, which is quite extensive. I have about seven different towns. They all feel very much that this change could be helpful to them.

SENATOR MEYER: Okay. I think the flex -- this is not a mandate; this is an option. And I think that saves and makes the bill a good bill. But I -- there are districts in Connecticut, i.e., in the State Senate and State House, where they really are one-party districts, where the primary is tantamount to the general election and, therefore, you want to be sure that you have enough polling places in primary. Generally, there would be a good turnout in the primary in those kind of districts.

But I think the fact that there's an option, there's flexibility here, makes it a good bill.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Well, you do bring up a very good point. It is true that many of the primaries, where there's a high percentage of one party being registered, that, in fact, it does become the general election. There's a pretty good

turnout. I've seen that in both Republican and Democratic communities as well.

But you're right. We should see if we can't leave it up to the communities. Hopefully, they'll be responsible and responsive to those concerns. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Anyone else? Thank you very much, Senator.

SENATOR BOUCHER: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Moving on to House Bill 5253, Representative Bill Aman.

REP. AMAN: Thank you for raising the bill for me. Bill Aman from the 14th District. I'm here to support the concept behind Bill No. 5253.

Current law states that if a town or city puts out any information regarding a referendum, it must be neutral, the information presented. And I agree entirely with that concept. I can't believe anybody does not agree with the concept that the town should only put out neutral information.

But the question always come out of what is neutral. The people in this room probably know better than anybody that anybody can take facts and put a spin on it any way they want. And so the question of neutrality on referendum questions becomes very important, especially for most towns, where it has a huge impact on the budget, people are very close to it, they're very emotional. And so the question of bias probably comes up more there than any other place.

What this bill simply says is that if the town

in that office, whether -- I don't think it needs the entire Commission but somebody within that office to say, "I reviewed it and, in my opinion, this is a neutral document."

REP. LESSER: Okay. I appreciate that, and I would just encourage you to make sure that the town is talking to SEEC to the extent that they can provide guidance, at least at this point, through their staff, that that might be helpful. That might be one way out of this mess.

Thank you again. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Any other questions? Thank you.

REP. AMAN: Thank you very much.

REP. MORIN: Appreciate it.

Kachina, do you want to testify? I know we heard your name previously. Welcome.

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: Good morning, Representative Morin, Senator Slossberg. I apologize; I wasn't here when my name was called earlier, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities supports Senate Bill 218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries. This issue has been brought up to us by a number of our members, with an interest in trying to save some costs on the local level.

What has been brought to our attention is the limits, the population limits that are contained within the bill and how our members have indicated to us that they would urge the

Committee to raise that population to thresholds of 60,000 or less, which would allow more municipalities to take advantage of this new potential of consolidating polling places.

In addition, our members -- because this could be a very critical decision that is made on the local level, our members have also asked that the chief elected, or chief executive officer be allowed to weigh in/sign off on making this decision to ensure that the best decision is made for the constituencies.

So, therefore, CCM supports the bill. We urge you to make a few changes to it. And if you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

REP. MORIN: Madam Chair.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Thank you. Thanks Kachina. You know, I understand what you're talking about when you say the chief elected official should be helping to make this decision. Right now we have the registrars of voters; so we've got both parties represented. Then you've got, you know, the possibility for candidate objections --

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: Uh-huh.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: -- because we know in some towns the primary is the general and there's intra-party squabbling that goes on.

My concern would be -- and I'm wondering what you think about it. Your chief elected official, by definition, is your chief elected official, which suggests that they are coming from one particular party or the other.

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: Certainly.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: And you're adding them into the mix here, where they may be of the opposite party. They may be of the same party, but they're one more party voice that's going to get involved in what would otherwise be the two registrars and, obviously, an opportunity for a candidate to object. Let's say a third party candidate thinks it's going to be problematic for them or whatnot.

Can you explain why it's necessary or why it would be important for the chief elected official to participate, or is that something that, you know, sort of was one of those ideas that, gee, maybe that would be a good idea but, as I'm thinking about it, maybe we need to rethink that?

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: I think you make a very valid point and I would definitely be able to take it back to our members about it. This issue was actually brought to us by one of the registrars of one of our more vocal municipalities and maybe it hadn't really been thought through that way.

I think when we vetted it as staff, our concern was that we didn't want -- we didn't want a decision being made to consolidate some places if it really wasn't the best decision for the municipality and that there might be voters, from a point of view, properly represented or have the best notice or the best accessibility to voting polls. But I think you made a valid point and, if I could, I would like to bring it back to my members and have an opportunity to speak with you further on that.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: Thank you for that, because I --

you know, obviously the registrars, at least in this Committee's opinion, are the most capable people at this point to make those sorts of decisions, if they're making them together. I mean, they do set the election places as it is. So for them to consolidate under -- you know, for primaries, they are obviously the most knowledgeable people to be making those sorts of decisions.

And the rest of the bill, I think, is really important. We've been trying to pass this for a long time, to try to give the towns some ability to save some money. I'd hate to see it tank because of something like that. So I appreciate your flexibility --

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: Certainly.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG: -- on that concept. That's it for me, Mr. Chairman.

REP. MORIN: Representative Floren.

REP. FLOREN: Thank you. I want to associate my comments with those of the Chair. I had a thought, though. You know how, now when we're printing ballots, we have the fail safe, that the registrars decide how many ballots to print and then the Secretary of the State writes off on that decision.

Shouldn't we put a component in there that the registrars decide about consolidation of primary locations and where they would be, but that the plan should have the signoff of the Secretary of the State? To me, I would feel very good about that, and I think that might answer some of the worries.

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: I'd hate to add more tasks to the

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Secretary of State's desk, but certainly that does seem like a fair compromise.

REP. MORIN: Anyone else? Thank you.

MS. WALSH-WEAVER: Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Now, Michael Brandi, Executive Director of State Elections Enforcement. Welcome. So glad to see you here, Michael. One thing that we'll ask, and you can do a little later. I don't think we have any testimony and we'd like to, if you have written testimony, we could get it. Get it over to Kate, so we can put it in the record.

MR. MICHAEL BRANDI: Very good. We will.

REP. MORIN: Thank you very much. Good to see you.

MR. MICHAEL BRANDI: Good morning, Chairperson Slossberg, Chairman Morin, ranking members, Senator McLachlan and Representative Hwang, and distinguished Committee members. I am Michael Brandi, the new executive director and general counsel for the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

I'm honored to speak before this Committee this morning, and I look forward to both a fruitful legislative session this year and to building a lasting positive relationship with the Committee in years to come.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill No. 5255, which contains the Commission's legislative initiative for this session. The SEEC's proposals this year have been streamlined carefully to request only that which is most important to facilitate our success during the 2012 election cycle in

SB212
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is please continue. Thank you.

MR. MICHAEL BRANDI: Thank you very much.

As for the other bills that are pending before the Committee: Senate Bill No. 212, An Act Concerning Provisional Ballots for State and Municipal Elections. The Committee supports Senate Bill 212, which expands access for provisional ballots to non-Federal elections and primaries.

As the administrator of the State's Election Day Hotline, the Commission finds itself in the unenviable position of informing many voters with registration problems on Election Day that provisional ballots are extremely limited in Connecticut. So we support the bill.

Senate Bill 214, An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status for the Permanently Disabled. As it has in the past, the Commission supports the concept of permanent absentee ballot status, wherein the ballots are delivered automatically after the elector's status has been supported by a physician's certificate. As such, we support this modification of General Statutes 9-140e, eliminating the requirement that such an elector continues to submit an application for each election primary or referendum.

Senate Bill No. 216, An Act Concerning Small Campaign Contributions to Nonparticipating Candidates. The Commission supports the concept of requiring that contributions from an individual, that in the aggregate do not exceed \$50, to become subject to disclosure requirements like those applied to participating candidates.

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understand. Yes, you --

SENATOR MC LACHLAN: -- in a timely fashion?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN WITH MICHAEL BRANDI: We have records that will guarantee consistency and that we'd be able to find out what we gave as advice and to let everyone know.

SENATOR MC LACHLAN: So that simple FOI request of the information made available. Thank you.

REP. MORIN: Thank you, Senator. Any other questions? Thank you very much, both of you. Appreciate it and look forward to working with you. Next, Judy Beaudreau.

Judy, would you please push the red button. Thank you.

JUDY BEAUDREAU: I wasn't feeling too well, so I wasn't sure I was going to stay today but I've submitted my testimony for everybody. So I'll just briefly go over all of the things that I wrote about. I was feeling bad, but after being in your presence I feel so much better.

Raised Senate Bill 212, the act concerning provisional ballots for all elections. We are -- all registrars are definitely in favor of this. I don't know who wouldn't be. This is a no-brainer. This is called -- you know, nobody gets disenfranchised this way. And maybe somewhere in this you should say that it will eliminate the challenge ballot process, which is hard to do and challenge somebody's right to vote. But with a provisional ballot you get them to vote and then you can research it later.

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The only thing I want to caution you on is

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The only thing I'm wanting to say is that with a certificate from a primary care provider, why is it that we are kind of punishing handicapped, disabled people? If I say I'm going to be out of town, you don't have to see proof.

You're -- I mean, I know it's great and it's wonderful but, you know, there's a lot of elderly people who do not say they are disabled, okay. They're not disabled, they don't have an illness, they just can't get to the polling place, and they're in wheelchairs or whatever, and they don't want to go to the polling place. To make them have to prove that they're disabled is really demeaning, and I really think that you should look at that. I really hope so.

Raised Senate Bill 217, challenge -- the removal of the challengers in the polling place. Absolutely. Definitely. You know, the days of challengers have left. Anyone can do this and it's time that we got them out of there; it's a cost that we don't need.

Let's see. Raised Senate Bill 218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries. I have given you some stats in my testimony, and I'm looking at -- you know, I'm looking at the percentage of voting, and it says, oh, 27.2 and it says 47.3, and I'm saying, wow, those are really good stats. But then look up who's registered and who actually voted and those are the stats you should be looking at.

So I got primaries where I had to open six polling places for 504 people. Divide that among six. I'm staffing these polling places for 504 people. That doesn't make sense to me.



Election Division
Election Administrators
Registrars of Voters

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*Chairman Senator Slosseberg, Representative Morin, members of G A & E Committee
My name is Judith Beaudreau, Registrar of Voters from Vernon. I am here today to testify
mostly in favor of all bills presented today.*

RSB 212

AAC PROVISIONAL BALLOTS FOR STATE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

This bill will get rid of the need for challenged ballots. Maybe some where in this bill should be written that Challenged ballots can be repealed and provisional ballots shall take the place of these.

I would like to suggest that it be slightly worded different. We want to make sure that the provisional Ballots are done by the Assist Registrar of Voters and not just a poll worker. Assistant Registrars do them now and are trained to do these types of ballots.

So in Line 56 - 58 New Language

(c) If a poll worker denies an individual the opportunity to cast a ballot for any reason for which a provisional ballot may be issued, such poll worker shall HAVE ~~offer~~ such individual OFFERED a provisional ballot.

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RSB 213

AAC INTERNET ACCESS FOR REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

It is sad that in the year 2012 that some of my colleagues do not have internet access in their offices. Registrars of Voters have been treated and thought about as that saying of "STEP CHILDREN". Everyone else in their respective town halls have internet and yet you have to mandate to the towns in CT that the Registrars of Voters must have internet access. This is amazing. Most of the Registrars of Voters information coming from DMV and other sources comes by way of the internet and these registrars have to get their information at home and bring to the office to do their work. This is really shameful that Registrars who run Elections are under such inadequate tools to do their jobs. Thank you for raising this bill and bringing this important issue to light....

Than in SEC 4 line # 94 & 95 it seems that the whole portion on challengers should come out not just the name challenger.

of one moderator, at least one, but not more than two official checkers, [~~not more than two~~ challengers] [~~if he deems it necessary~~], and at least one and not more

RSB 218

AAC POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES

This is a great suggestion to saving money in primaries. Today we have fewer registrations for enrollments and it really is a waste of tax payer's funds to hold primaries in the same places as Elections. The percentage of enrolled members in a primary that actually come out to vote is very small.

For instance in Vernon: 30 Thousand Population 6 polling places

	Registered	in person	abs	%voting
2000 Dem	4262	1125	34	27.2%
Rep	3056	1313	48	44.5
2004 Dem	4112	504	23	12.8
2006 Dem	4318	1963	79	47.3
2008 Dem	4645	2479	105	55.6
Rep	2808	1041	62	39.3
2010 Dem	4867	1187	88	26.2
Rep	2830	915	65	34.6

If you look at the percentages it looks great but let's look at how many are enrolled registered electors and divide that by 6 polling places. Hardly worth the money to open all of the polling places for such little turn out. This coming Republican Primary on the 24th of April and our August Primaries will bring similar stats. It is time we looked at doing business better for less money. I hope that you will consider this and also raise the population level so that municipalities such as myself can also join in this if it passes. Population is always the potential but true to fact is the enrollment stats and they are considerably much lower. I would suggest a population of 50 or 60 thousand.

 (b) In each municipality having a population of twenty thousand



Town of Fairfield · Registrar of Voters Office
611 Old Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824

Testimony of Matthew Waggoner, Registrar
(203) 256-3115 | mwaggoner@town.fairfield.ct.us

27 February 2012

Dear Chairs Morin and Slossberg, Ranking Members Hwang and McLachlan, and Members of GAE,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on today's election policy items. My written testimony is below.

SB 212: AN ACT CONCERNING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS FOR STATE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

I am in favor of allowing voters who find themselves unexpectedly ineligible to vote at the polls to vote a full ballot provisionally. A number of these ballots are counted at each Federal election now, and when it's discovered during an investigation that a voter should have been able to vote but for a data entry mistake in a Registrar's office or at the DMV, it seems unjust to have taken a portion of the ballot away from that voter. SB 212 allows this problem to be fully reversed after an appropriate examination of the facts.

Further, I appreciate the removal of challenged ballots from the election process -- unlike provisional ballots, these are in practice never counted, and there have been a handful of cases of poll workers or political entities pushing the envelope in terms of making arbitrary or capricious challenges to voters. Provisional ballots are a valuable tool in the polling place, allowing what might have been a time consuming, embarrassing, or confrontational situation to be handled to everyone's satisfaction, and to have the facts evaluated by the Registrars acting jointly and in consultation with our legal resources in statute and at the Secretary of State's office rather than having the final decision be made in the field, perhaps to the detriment of the challenged voter.

SB 218: AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.

HB 5254: AN ACT CONCERNING PRIMARIES FOR MUNICIPAL OR STATE OFFICE.

The approach requiring consensus of all Registrars to reduce polling places is the correct one. As a Registrar in a large town, I am very reluctant to sacrifice accumulated voter education for a modest cost savings, and with the exception of very small districts such as those where only hundreds of voters are represented by the same State Rep and State Senator, the savings will probably be very small indeed. However, several large cities with a "party dominant" population will be opening dozens of polling places to serve fewer than a thousand voters in the coming Presidential primary, and it doesn't seem clear why this bill would prevent towns with over 20,000 voters from making the decision on cost versus voter convenience for themselves.

Also, my office became aware of a counter-intuitive requirement of our statutes in 2010, when petitions for a local question were certified such that the referendum was to be held the same week as the 2010 primaries for Governor. Section (b) of SB 218 allows the Moderators for two different party primaries to be reduced to one, but state law still requires a referendum or special election held concurrently with primaries to be held in a separate location with entirely different staff and equipment. I expect several other towns will experience this unfortunate scenario as budget referenda fall on dates near to the April primary.

I support the provision allowing offices to use the same moderator for two simultaneous primaries, but would ask that the committee consider abstracting this concept to allow for one moderator to oversee multiple election events held in the same voting district, and to permit referenda and other election events to be held in the same physical location as primaries held on the same date. HB 5254, focusing on flexibility in staffing and equipment, may also be a potential vehicle for this change.



DENISE MERRILL

SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

**GAE Committee
Public Hearing Testimony
February 27, 2012**

Good Morning Chairman Morin, Chairman Slossberg and members of the committee. For the record my name is Denise Merrill and I am Secretary of the State of Connecticut. I would like to briefly address eight bills before the committee this morning

- Raised Bill 212 "AN ACT CONCERNING PROVISIONAL BALLOTS FOR STATE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS"

This bill would allow provisional ballots to be used in state and municipal elections, and I support this concept, which is our proposal. Currently, provisional ballots are available in federal elections for voters who are registered but for some reason their name is not on the registry list for their polling place or town. When you vote by provisional ballot you are only casting votes for federal candidates.

This bill will allow a provisional ballot to look like the regular ballot being used because it will include all the candidates running for office in that election. Because federal candidates only run in even number election year, the provisional ballots are not used during municipal elections. This bill would extend the use of provisional ballots to all elections for all offices including local candidates. This also gives us an opportunity to streamline the election process. By extending the use of Provisional ballots, we can then eliminate the need to have challenge ballots. Provisional ballots allow voters whose registration is in doubt to cast ballots on Election Day.

Our office proposed this bill last year as well, and it did pass the House. Very simply, we have had the provisional ballot in use for a number of years and there have been no incidents of any kind on Election Day which would give us any security or integrity concern. Provisional ballots are counted later, up to six days after Election Day – only after it is determined that the voter is legitimately registered. If the registrars are unable to determine that the applicant is eligible to vote, then the ballot is not counted.

Provisional ballots are currently in use for federal elections; raised bill 212 would expand that to municipal and state elections. I support passage.

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SB215
SB218
HB5250
HB5251

- **Raised Bill 215 “AN ACT CONCERNING SPECIAL ELECTION TIMING FOR PROBATE JUDGE VACANCIES”**

I will say that in general I support this concept. I will add that the bill as it is currently constructed needs to be reconciled with other state statutes that govern this area. We look forward to working with the members of this committee on a workable solution.

- **Raised Bill 218 “AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES”**

This bill would permit small towns (under 20,000 in population) to reduce the number of polling places for primaries. The cost of running elections is of particular concern for small towns. Many times you will have a much smaller voter turnout for a primary than for a general election. As such, a town may not need to staff and run as many polling places for a primary as they do at a general election. Reducing the number of polling places would definitely save towns money, and in general we support the idea of cutting the cost of elections.

Appropriately, this bill also addresses the important issue of how to notify voters of a change in polling location. However, eliminating certain polling places becomes problematic in cities where the neighborhood polling place is important because people can get there by foot. Eliminating a polling place in a city neighborhood can create voter confusion and place a hardship on a voter who does not have a car if he or she wants to exercise their right to vote.

There were also frankly some concerns about undue political influence in the big cities – where the primary is the major election – if certain primary precincts that are considered the base of one candidate are somehow eliminated. We have tried a compromise on this issue in the past, so what I would say about this bill is that if a compromise can be reached that addresses the needs of the small towns to lower their election costs while not creating problems for voters in the bigger cities, I will support such a compromise.

- **Raised Bill 5250 “AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF PRIMARY POLLING OFFICIALS”**

This bill would provide that an enrolled party member in the state, rather than just an enrolled party member in the municipality, may serve as a primary polling place official. Currently, any registered voter in the state can serve as a poll worker in a general election. This bill would make that rule applicable for a primary, where any enrolled party member in the state could serve as a poll worker for a primary of their party in any town in Connecticut.

I support this concept because any registrar of voters will tell you how difficult it is to find qualified poll workers for a primary. This bill would expand the pool of people available to work at the polls and that is a good thing. My feeling is that if voters from different towns can work the polls in other towns in Connecticut in a general election, the same rule should apply to enrolled party members in a primary. This bill simply conforms primaries to what is already done in general elections. So I support this bill and I urge passage.

Connecticut Town Clerks Association, Inc.

Committee Members

Antoinette Chick Spinelli -
Waterbury, CH
Essie Labrot, West Hartford,
V. CH
Jeff Barske, Thompson
George Buckbee, New Milford
Debra H. Denette, East Haddam
Michele Grande, Redding
Mary Stanton, Mansfield



Advisory Board Members

Joyce Mascena, CTCA-Pres.
Patty Strauss, 1st V-Pres.
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Joseph Camposeo, Imd. Past Pres.
Bernice Dixon, Vitals Comm. CH
Kim Garvis, TechnologyComm.CI
Lobbyist. Michael Dugan

2012 Legislative Committee

Testimony Government Administration and Elections Committee February 27, 2012

Good morning Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Morin, Sen. McLachlan, Rep. Hwang and the distinguished members of the GAE Committee. My name is Essie Labrot and I am testifying on behalf of the Connecticut Town Clerks' Association (CTCA). I am the Vice Chair of the Legislative Committee for the Town Clerks' Association and the Town Clerk of West Hartford. I am here today to testify in support of **Senate Bill 214** An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status for the Permanently Disabled.

The Town Clerks Association has supported similar legislation in the past, and we are pleased to do so again with the changes mentioned in this proposal specifically that a ballot will be sent for each election instead of just the application. We believe that this legislation will offer some assistance and ease of voting for those who regularly require an absentee ballot due to a disability.

In addition, the Town Clerks' Association supports **Senate Bill 218** An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries. This legislation would permit small towns the option to reduce the number of polling places for a Primary Election. This legislation will permit municipalities to save money during these difficult fiscal times for towns. Our Association is mindful of the potential for voter confusion whenever a polling place is relocated but we understand this would be less of an issue for towns that have populations under 20,000.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Essie Labrot, West Hartford Town Clerk
Vice Chair, CTCA Legislative Committee



February 27, 2012 GAE Public Hearing

ROVAC Testimony in SUPPORT of Raised Bill No. 218

AAC POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES

I am Sue W. Larsen, Registrar of Voters, Town of South Windsor

I am here to speak in favor of SB218. As municipalities struggle to meet the demands of the residents, Registrars of Voters are also trying to keep their budgets as low as possible while still maintaining the voters' trust. With voter turnout usually 50% or less, primaries are an expense that can be reduced without disenfranchising the voter.

Fewer polling places will lessen the number of poll workers, reduce the number of tabulators and thereby reduce the costs of the associated memory cards along with reducing paperwork and supplies used at each polling place.

SB218 will affect towns with populations under 20,000. There are towns with larger populations would like to be included as well, but this may be a good first step, work through the details of implementation on a smaller scale. As with all changes, there are political ramifications but this bill appears to have accounted for this by allowing the candidates to have input into the decision.

Notification of a polling place change is covered by mail in the bill, however if a town has an electronic means of notification, this option should be included as well as this could be a cost savings measure to the town.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sue W. Larsen
Democratic Registrar of Voters
South Windsor

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P-3

line # 17

Dear Senator Slossberg and Rep Morin,

Thank you for raising the Polling Places for Primaries bill. I have a couple of concerns about the way the bill is currently written. Most importantly, a **population cutoff of just 20,000** is written into the language. **This would exclude Simsbury, Wethersfield, Torrington, Ridgefield, Westport, and North Haven**—all towns that are looking for this bill to pass! When this has been discussed in previous sessions, a 60,000 number has been used. As far as I know, this number satisfies the larger cities that are concerned that the bill would not work for them.

Also, in order for this bill to allow us to apply the changes to the Republican Presidential Preference Primary on April 24, the bill would have to be signed no later than the first week of March (very wishful thinking, I know!).

I look forward to testifying at public hearing. I wanted to make you aware of these issues

http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=SB00218&which_year=2012

Karen Cortés

Democratic Registrar of Voters

Town of Simsbury

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Simsbury, CT 06070

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February 27, 2012

Testimony of Senator Toni Boucher

**In Support of SB 218, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR
PRIMARIES.**

Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin, Ranking Member McLachlan, Ranking Member Hwang, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, today I testify in support of SB 218, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES, and urge this committee to pass this bill. SB 218 would permit municipalities to use fewer polling places for primaries than for the general election.

The turnout difference between general elections and primary elections is glaring. The high water mark for recent turnout was the 2008 Presidential election, which garnered an impressive 78.14% turnout of Connecticut voters. Turnout for an August 2009 Primary election was a meager 13.9%. Despite the disparity, our towns still had to properly staff and maintain the same number of polling places. This bill would give municipalities the flexibility to adjust the number of polling places depending on need.

As you know, there are potential municipal savings that could be realized through the elimination of polling locations. They include staffing costs, possible renting costs, the transportation of materials to each polling location, and the installation of phone lines for each polling location. In addition, some of my towns are finding it increasingly difficult to find enough poll workers to properly maintain each polling place, particularly in a low interest election.

Although SB 218 makes much needed changes to our polling laws, I would like to suggest that the cutoff population in the bill be raised from 20,000 residents to include towns with up to 50,000 residents, in the interest of benefiting more of our municipalities. During these difficult times, we need to extend the ability to cut costs to as many of our towns as possible. By allowing them to operate and pay for fewer polling places for lower turnout primaries, we will provide a small measure of financial relief that can be passed along to the taxpayers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak in favor of SB 218.



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS

February 27, 2012

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent over 90% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

CCM supports Senate Bill 218 "*An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries*".

This bill would allow municipalities with (a) a population of 20,000 or less, or, (b) a voting district of 20,000 or less to designate polling places other than those used during a general election - allowing local registrars of voters to achieve a level of savings by consolidating polling places, when appropriate. It is estimated that a savings in excess of \$10,000 could be achieved for a small town.

This concept is supported by municipalities across the state of varying sizes and location, therefore CCM urges the following changes to the bill:

- (1) The population threshold of 20,000 or less would exclude many medium sized towns from taking advantage of this cost saving measure. At a time when all levels of government are seeking ways to reduce costs, while not hampering services to constituents, CCM urges raising the municipal population threshold to populations of 60,000 or less.
- (2) The decision to consolidate polling places can have a large impact on voters and should be carefully considered, therefore CCM urges requiring the approval of the chief elected/executive official of the municipality.

CCM urges the committee to make the changes outlined above and favorably report the bill.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

If you have any questions, please contact Kachina Walsh-Weaver, Senior Legislative Associate of CCM via email kwweaver@ccm-ct.org or via phone (203) 710-9525.



**Testimony
Bart Russell
Executive Director
Connecticut Council of Small Towns
Government Administration and Elections Committee
February 27, 2012**

The Connecticut Council of Small Towns supports SB-218, An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries, which will allow small towns to reduce the number of polling places and moderators for primaries.

Under current law, towns are required to have the same number of polling locations for both primary and general elections even though voter turnout is significantly lower for party primaries. An estimated 50% of the state's 2.4 million registered voters aren't even eligible to participate in primaries because they are not registered with a party.

Requiring towns to use and staff the same number of polling places is expensive and unnecessary. In fact, the Office of Fiscal Analysis has estimated that the bill could save some towns up to \$25,000 per year. Given the difficult financial circumstances facing towns, it makes sense to give them the option to reduce costs in this manner.

By providing that notice be sent to electors regarding the location of the polling places, the bill ensures that citizens will have the information they need to vote in party primaries.

In addition, COST urges committee members to consider ways of addressing concerns in small towns with split districts following redistricting. Polling locations are required to be located within each precinct, which may require small towns with split districts to add polling locations. There is a process for requesting an exception from this requirement from the Secretary of State's Office and we are hopeful this will address these concerns. However, we urge the committee to further review this issue to determine whether more flexibility is needed to ensure that small towns with split districts do not incur substantial additional costs.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns
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H - 1145

**CONNECTICUT
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2012**

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PART 23
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cd/sg/lg/sd/ev
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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REP. MORIN (28th):

Mr. Speaker, I move that this resolution be placed on the consent calendar.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The motion before us is this item be placed on the consent calendar.

Is there objection? Is there objection?

Hearing none, this item is placed on the consent calendar.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar 475?

THE CLERK:

On page 25, calendar 475, Substitute for Senate Bill 218, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES, favorable by the Committee on Planning and Development.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Representative Morin, you have the floor again, sir.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Mr. Speaker, I move for acceptance of the joint committees' favorable report and passage of the bill in concurrence with Senate.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The question is on acceptance of the joint

committees' favorable report and passage of the bill
in concurrence with the Senate.

Will you remark, sir?

REP. MORIN (28th):

Mr. Speaker, the bill changes election laws
affecting primary polling places, registrars of
voters, submissions of voting districts, et cetera.

I -- also, the Clerk is in possession of an
amendment, LCO 3912. I would ask the Clerk to please
call the amendment, and that I be granted leave of the
Chamber to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 3912, which
will be designated Senate Amendment Schedule "A."

THE CLERK:

LCO 3912, Senate "A" offered by Senator Slossberg
and Representative Morin.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to
summarize amendment.

Is there objection to summarization? Is there
objection to summarization?

Hearing none, Representative Morin, please
proceed, sir.

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REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Senate Amendment "A" makes changes to notification requirements concerning the primary polling place reductions and require signs to be posted at any closed locations.

I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of Senate Amendment Schedule "A."

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, let me try your minds.

All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it.

The amendment is adopted.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

Representative Morin.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Clerk is in possession of amendment -- of an

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amendment, LCO 4013. I would ask the Clerk to please call the amendment, and that I be granted leave of the Chamber to summarize.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 4013, which will be designated Senate Amendment Schedule "B."

THE CLERK:

LCO 4013, Senate "B" offered by Representative -- Senator Witkos and Senator Slossberg.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Representative seeks leave of the Chamber to summarize the amendment.

Is there objection to summarization? Is there objection to summarization?

Hearing none, Representative Morin, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This Amendment "B" specifies the registrars need not send notifications concerning primary polling place location after an initial notification.

I move adoption.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The question before the Chamber is on adoption of

House Amendment Schedule "B."

Will you remark further on the amendment? Will
you remark further on the amendment?

Hearing none, I'll try your minds.

All those in favor, please signify by saying aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Those opposed, nay.

The ayes have it.

The amendment adopted.

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Will you remark further on the bill as amended?

Representative Morin, you have the floor, sir.

REP. MORIN (28th):

Mr. Speaker, I move that this resolution be
placed on the consent calendar.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The motion before us is to places item on the
consent calendar.

Is there objection? Is there objection?

Hearing none, this item is placed on the consent
calendar.

Will Clerk please call Calendar 481?

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On page 7, Calendar 219, House Bill Number 5148,
AN ACT CONCERNING AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNICATIONS TO
VICTIMS OF THE CURRENT OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
THAT RESULTS IN DEATH OR SERIOUS PHYSICAL INJURY.
DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

The distinguished Majority Leader, Representative
Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good to see you up there.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ARESIMOWICZ:

Thank you, sir.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Mr. Speaker, this represents the consent calendar
and for everyone's edification, I will be listing off
the calendar numbers in numerical order so that
everyone can follow. I'll try keep it -- and make
sure that I do it in numerical order. Thank you.

These will be: Calendar Number 90, Number 155,
Number 219, Number 223, Number 290, Number 320, Number
338, Number 345, Number 389, Number 430, Number 444,
Number 455, Number 467, Number 470, Number 475, Number
481, Number 485, Number 488, Number 489, Number 494,

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Number 496, Number 497, Number 505, Number 510, Number 513, Number 525, and Number 531.

I move adoption, I move adoption.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move adoption of the consent calendar. I move the consent calendar.

(Speaker Donovan in the Chair.)

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The question before us is on passage of the bills on today's consent calendar.

Will you remark?

If not, staff and guests please come to the well the House. Members take their seats. The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll call. Members to the chamber. The House is voting today's consent calendar by roll call. Members to the chamber please.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Have all members voted? Have all members voted?

Please check the roll call board to make sure your vote has been properly cast.

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If all members have voted, the machine will be locked, and the Clerk will take a tally.

The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

On today's consent calendar

Total number voting	144
Necessary for passage	73
Those voting Yea	144
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	7

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

The consent calendar passes.

Any announcements or introductions? Any announcements or introductions?

Is there any business on the Clerk's desk?

THE CLERK:

A list of Senate bills, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER DONOVAN:

Representative Brendan Sharkey.

REP. SHARKEY (88th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I move that we waive -- waive the reading of the bills and have these items placed immediately on the House calendar.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2012**

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Those absent and not voting 1

THE CHAIR:

The bill as amended passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. If we might stand at ease for just a few moments and then we will have some additional items to mark.

THE CHAIR:

The Senate will stand at ease.

(CHAMBER AT EASE.)

Senator Looney. The Senate will come back to order.
Senator Looney.

The Senate will stand at ease.

(CHAMBER AT EASE.)

The Senate will come back to order. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, a couple of additional items to mark go at this time.

First, Calendar Page 27, Calendar 106, Senate Bill 218 previously marked pass temporarily, now marked go.

And Calendar Page 29, Calendar 138, Senate Bill 27 also marked go. If the Clerk might call those items next, Mr. President. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 27, Calendar 107, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 218 AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR

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PRIMARIES. Favorable Report of the Committee on Planning and Development.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

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

THE CHAIR:

On acceptance and passage. Will you remark?

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. The Clerk has in his possession, LCO Number 3912. I would ask that it be called and I be granted leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call LCO 3912.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 3912, Senate "A", offered by Senator Slossberg and Representative Morin.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President, and I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

On adoption. Will you remark?

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes. Mr. President, this bill before us does a couple of things. It allows the registrar of voters in

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conjunction with the various candidates to reduce the number of polling places in a primary.

And as we know, in primaries we have a significantly lower turnout than we do in a general election in some towns and municipalities, and what this bill does amongst other things is allows those municipalities that would like to reduce the number of polling places and thereby save the towns some money, the ability to do so.

In addition to that, it makes some minor and technical changes --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg, please hold on. (GAVEL) Will the Senate come to order, please. Senator Slossberg's trying to bring out a bill. Please proceed.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. It makes some minor and technical changes to help with the administration of our election laws. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further? Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. Good afternoon.

THE CHAIR:

Good afternoon, sir.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Through you, if I may, a couple of questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The amendment.

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SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

The amendment.

SENATOR RORABACK:

The amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. Through you to Senator Slossberg, first I want to thank her. There was a primary that was held this Tuesday in the State of Connecticut and under an existing law there were hundreds and hundreds of polling places, which were required to be open and I believe that the turnout was less than 10 percent of eligible voters, maybe 15 percent, but it was a very low number of eligible voters.

And Mr. President, I'm pleased that Senator Slossberg and the GAE Committee have seen the waste which occurs when we have in one community, six, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen polling places open and some of the polling places draw fewer than 100 voters between 6:00 o'clock in the morning and 8:00 o'clock in the evening.

So through you, Mr. President, to Senator Slossberg, my understanding is, this amendment will enable registrars to reduce the number of polling places and through what mechanism will they do that?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you. Through you, Mr. President, I just want to clarify for the circle, we do have an additional amendment that I'd like to call after we've adopted it

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that further addresses this particular mechanism, so I don't know if the good Senator would prefer to wait until we've adopted the main amendment and then the next amendment, which speaks very specifically to the section that the good Senator is referring to.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. I don't always take a hint, but in this case I think I will take the hint and I will sit down and await the calling of the next amendment. Thank you, Mr. President, and reserve the right to perhaps ask some questions at that time.

THE CHAIR:

So noted.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Slossberg.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

The magic light. Thank you, Mr. President, through you, a question or two to the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator Slossberg for bringing the bill forward and I wonder if you could clarify.

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This amendment is a change from the original bill in that it's adding pieces from other bills that were before us in the GAE Committee. I wonder if you could just clarify those changes. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you. Through you, Mr. President, that is correct, Senator McLachlan. These were some technical pieces from some other GAE bills that deal with the administration of our election laws, including conforming our laws that deal with registrars of voters and procedures in the cases of misconduct or willful or material neglect of duty and conforming them to what the law is for town clerks as well as encouraging our town clerks to submit their various submissions to the Secretary of State that relate to redistricting in an electronic format if that format is available.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you, Senator. Clarification. The redistricting process I think was confusing to some of the registrars. I got some feedback that the information provided to them from the Redistricting Commission was not complete and not enough information for them to begin the process of creating new lists and so forth and clarifying boundaries.

Could you just clarify for us if this bill, this amendment before us speaks to the communication between the process here at the State Capitol of redistricting and how that information is communicated to the local municipalities. Through you, Mr. President.

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Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. Through you, this particular bill specifically to, in the areas to the extent that I discussed redistricting really deals with requiring the town clerks to submit voting district maps in electronic format when possible.

There is also a training that is run by the Secretary of State, and under those circumstances there would be some discussion of how to file voting district returns electronically. That's really the focus of these amendments, to try to help the town clerks file where possible some of that sort of election information electronically where they have that available.

Because currently, the information that we've received is that very often the Secretary of State's office and indeed, it's our nonpartisan staff from the Office of Legal Research, from OLR, that ends up having to compile all the information and what they end up getting is sometimes they get maps that have been, are your regular street maps that are generally available. Sometimes you can get them in a diner and they've got lines literally drawn on them as to what the new districts are.

So this is an attempt to encourage and help our towns file them electronically, which will be more efficient on both sides whenever that's possible.

THE CHAIR:

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, Senator. I think that's a good move that we try to make the process easier and streamlined. I'm supportive of this amendment and will support it. Thank you.

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Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, I'll try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Those opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it. Senate "A" is adopted. Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, thank you, Mr. President. The Clerk also has in his possession LCO Number 4013, and I would ask that that be called and I be granted leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, please call LCO 4013.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 4013, Senate "B", offered by Senator Slossberg and Senator Witkos.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. And I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

On adoption, will you remark?

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Yes, Mr. President, thank you. This amendment clarifies the procedure under which a registrar of voters, the registrars of voters, may actually reduce the number of polling places required in a primary,

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and I'd like to thank Senator Witkos for his good work and advocacy in this area.

As Senator Roraback had mentioned in the primary, the Republican presidential primary that just occurred on April 24th, it is my understanding that we had a 14 percent turnout in the state.

For many towns though, that had to have a number of polling places open, it was inefficient and incredibly wasteful. However, for some towns they don't want to change the primary polling places for a variety of different reasons.

So after many years of working on this particular process, I think hopefully we finally have it down and have a way that we can meet all of the needs of our municipalities in this particular area and I would look forward to the Chamber's support, hopefully, on this amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the amendment? Senator Witkos? No? Will you remark further on the amendment. Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS:

Thank you, Mr. President. I rise in strong support of the amendment and I want to thank Senator Slossberg for her leadership on this, and also for Secretary of State Denise Merrill. She and I had the pleasure of speaking on Tuesday and she was traveling around to some of the polling places and one of them happened to be my district and we commiserated on how it was unfortunate that some of the small towns had to have multiple polling locations open and the voter turnout was just dismal, to say the best.

And I think this is a cost-savings measure to the small towns and to the registrars out of their budgets and I think it's going to be an improvement overall. There's many safeguards in there for the towns if they want to continue keeping it in the as is system of primary voting, but there's also a mechanism, which streamlines for the towns, the ability to condense the

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polling locations and I strongly support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. This time I want to rise and thank both Senator Slossberg and Senator Witkos for getting to the finish line an idea that's been kicking around for a long, long time.

I remember the primary, I think it was of 1998 or 2000 where turnout was incredibly low and the argument that was offered was that we would somehow discourage people from, the low turnout, we should work to increase turnout and that's of course, always the case. But that's not an argument against trying to be efficient in the administration of our elections.

I know in one community that I represent together with Senator Witkos, the City of Torrington, when they have a referendum, a budget referendum or a bonding referendum, there's one polling place. Everyone knows to go to city hall to vote in a referendum.

I don't think it's that much of a stretch for, in the case of a primary, to tell the voters in Torrington that the place you go to vote is one place, city hall or any other designated place.

In fact, it's kind of ironic, because as I read this amendment, if we had had this in place this year, every voter would have gotten a post card, every voter whose polling place had changed would have gotten a post card from the registrar saying, by the way, instead of voting at this school, you're going to be voting at this city hall, and maybe it would have actually increased the turnout because it would have reminded people, oh, yeah, I forgot. There's a primary on April 24th.

So I'm very happy that Senator Slossberg and Senator Witkos are bringing common sense to the primary voting process and as happy as I am and as they are, there

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are a lot of registrars and poll workers throughout the State of Connecticut who are going to take a deep sigh of relief in knowing that the next time there's a primary, I don't know, whether through you, Mr. President, to Senator Slossberg.

Will this new rule be effective for the primaries which are scheduled for August 14th? Through you, Mr. President, to Senator Slossberg.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. I need to just look at the effective. It is effective from passage.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Roraback.

SENATOR RORABACK:

Thank you, Mr. President. I think this is a good thing whose time has come and I hope that the House will show the wisdom of the Senate in giving this measure its support. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Gomes.

SENATOR GOMES:

Thank you, Mr. President. Just one question through you to the proponent of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR GOMES:

I heard mention of a post card being sent to people whose polling place has changed. Is that a fact in

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the primaries or other elections, if the polling place has changed that you will get a notice by post card, that it has changed?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you. Through you, Mr. President, with this bill, if a primary polling place is going to change, then you will get a post card that it is changed.

SENATOR GOMES:

Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gomes. Thank you, Senator. Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. I stand in support of this amendment. I want to thank Senator Witkos for his idea about communicating the change in polling places. That location change, Senator Witkos expressed concern that people would show up at their normally assigned polling place and see a door locked and not be able to vote, not knowing where to go.

So Senator Witkos, thank you for raising that idea that we need to communicate better with the voters to let them know about a change.

One of the things that I was very concerned about, and I was able to enlist the support and agreement of the Co-Chairs of the Government Administration and Elections Committee on was the fact that if you're going to reduce the number of polling places in a hotly contested primary, that could be objectionable to one or perhaps both of the candidates in that primary, that if there's going to be changing in polling places and in some, and by some perception a more difficult time to get people to the polls, that

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if one of the candidates should object to a reduction in the polling places, they may file an appeal to that and all polling places will remain open.

So leading to Senator Gomes' concern that there be communication about it, I think also this amendment serves us well in that in those rare instances, but certainly do occur where there is a very contentious race, then we can remain with the normal number of polling places in that community.

I do stand in support of this. Once again, thank you, Senator Slossberg for your leadership bringing this money-saving opportunity forward. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the amendment? Will you remark further on the amendment? If not, I'll try your minds. All those in favor please signify by saying Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Those opposed, Nay? The Ayes have it Senate "B" is adopted. Senator Slossberg. Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President. I rise to support the bill. As has been mentioned before, this has been a long time coming. Many individuals have proposed this idea over a number of years. It has been refined to the point now that it has addressed many issues that have been brought forward.

My thanks also go to certainly Senator Witkos, and others in the Chamber, and certainly the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Slossberg, for bringing this forward this year.

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It's a timely moment for us to be bringing it forward. Our registrars of voters have come to us on multiple occasions to outline the issues and problems, and I know that this last primary just recently held for the Republican presidential race, certainly pointed out that there, because of a lack of a real contest as perceived by many, produced a much smaller response to the polls on that day, and we had a number of poll workers that were there spending a great deal of time just chatting with each other rather than really servicing the various voters that would come through the door, and it pointed out the cost and expense and time that it entails.

So it really does address the issue of efficiency but also addresses other issues that were brought forward as a concern, so I'm very grateful that we finally have addressed this issue and I know that our registrars will be very happy when we conclude this business and hopefully it will also be passed by the House.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark further on the bill as amended? Senator Slossberg.

SENATOR SLOSSBERG:

Thank you, Mr. President. If there's no objection, I'd ask that this item be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Hearing and seeing no objection, so ordered. Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 29, Calendar 138, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 27 AN ACT TRANSITIONING THE REGULATIONS OF CONNECTICUT STATE AGENCIES TO AN ONLINE FORMAT. Favorable Report of the Committees on Government Administration and Elections and Judiciary.

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THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark? Will you remark? All in favor, then I'll ask the Chamber, all in favor of Amendment "A", please say Aye.

SENATORS:

Aye.

THE CHAIR:

Opposed? Amendment "A" passes. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, thank you. Thank you, Madam President. I would move that Senate Bill 368, Calendar 320 as amended be referred to the Committee on Labor and Public Employees.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the Clerk would now call those items on the Consent Calendar, and if we might move to a vote on the First Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 26, Calendar 86, Senate Bill 150.

Page 11, Calendar 338, Senate Bill 194.

Page 12, Calendar 353, Senate Bill 366.

Page 27, Calendar 107, Senate Bill 218.

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On Page 29, Calendar 138, Senate Bill Number 27.

Page 26, Calendar 88, Senate Bill 55.

On Page 34, Calendar 311, Senate Bill 101.

On Page 9, Calendar 321, Senate Bill 414.

On Page 1, Calendar Number 63, Senate Bill 227.

On Page 5, Calendar 225, Senate Bill 410.

And on Page 11, Calendar 332, Senate Bill 341.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes, Madam President, if we might wait just a moment.
We needed to verify a couple of items before the
Consent Calendar is voted.

THE CHAIR:

Absolutely, sir.

THE CLERK:

And there is one more item. On Page 33, Calendar 295,
Senate Bill Number 248.

THE CHAIR:

Are any other additions or corrections that we can
see? If not, then Mr. Clerk, will you please call for
a roll call vote and the machine will be opened on the
Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

An immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll
call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

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Have all members voted? If all members voted the machine will be locked. Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally on the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

On today's Consent Calendar.

Total number voting	35
Necessary for passage	18
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar passes.

Right now I ask for points of personal privilege.
Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President. I rise for a point of personal privilege.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Madam President, on my way up to the Capitol this morning I learned the sad news of the passing of a good friend, Jo McKenzie, who many of us in the circle, especially those of us who belong to the Republican Party, affectionately knew Joe McKenzie as Momma Jo.

I first met Momma Jo in the early 1970s as a young boy. She was always active in the Republican Party. In 1979 she was the first woman ever elected Chairman of the Connecticut Republican Party and for probably 15 years plus, served as Republican National Committee Woman from the State of Connecticut.

She was a wonderful woman, always with a laugh and fun, had an incredible sense of style as you may know.