

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

PA 16-31

SB254

Senate	776-778, 931-932	5
Gov. Admin. & Elections	684-685, 690, 721, 722	5

House Transcripts have not been received. They are available on CGA website, but are not the Official copy. Contact House Clerk for assistance (860) 240-0400 **10**

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate and House of Representatives Proceedings

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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS
2016**

**VOL. 59
PART 3
679 – 1032**

cf
SENATE

98
April 20, 2016

Madam President, I move that we place this item on the Consent Calendar, if there's no objection.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered. Whoops. Are you objecting? Okay, then. The bill is on the Consent Calendar. This is some day. Senator Duff, why do you rise then, sir?

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Well, it's been a while since we spoke, I thought I'd say hi.

THE CHAIR:

Oh ok, thank you sir.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If the clerk can skip a few bills and if he can now call calendar page 6, Calendar 232, Senate Bill 254.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On Page 6, Calendar 254 -- 254 -- I'm sorry, Calendar 232, Senate Bill Number 254 AN ACT CONCERNING SATURDAY REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SESSIONS.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Cassano. Senator Cassano please.

cf
SENATE

99
April 20, 2016

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Thank you, Madam President. I think this will be easier than the last one. This bill eliminates the mandated Saturday sessions, which is the third week before the day of each state of municipal -- state or municipal election, with open registrations and so on, it's unnecessary, it's a burden on the registrars that they don't need, so I move adoption of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Motions on adoption of the bill. Motions acceptance and adoption. Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill? Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you, Madam President. If I may, just one question of the proponent of the bill, please.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you. Through you, Madam President, although this eliminates a mandate on the communities to have a Saturday registration, would the registrars be allowed to have one if they so desire? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

cf
SENATE

100
April 20, 2016

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

Yes they may. At any time they can do that.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS (8TH):

Thank you Madam President. That's all the questions I have.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you very much. Will you remark further? Will you remark further? If not --

SENATOR CASSANO (4TH):

I would ask that it be placed on the Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objections of it being placed, so ordered sir. It's on the Consent Calendar.

Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, if the clerk can now please call Calendar -- calendar page 7, Calendar 243, Senate Bill 364.

cf
SENATE

253
April 20, 2016

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

Thank you, and that, I believe is the end of our Consent Calendar. If the clerk can now call the items on the Consent Calendar, followed by a vote on our Consent Calendar today.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk. We gotta' wait two seconds to get this on, up and running, and then we will start getting the list called for you, sir.

Mr. Clerk, please call the Consent Calendar.

THE CLERK:

On page 2, Calendar 131, Senate Bill 204. Page 3, Calendar 133, Senate Bill 207. Page 3, Calendar 145, Senate Bill 132. Page 4, 180 -- Calendar 183, Senate Bill 236. Page 5, Calendar 192, Senate Bill 230. Page 6, Calendar 232, Senate Bill 254. Page 7, Calendar 243, Senate Bill 364. Page 8, Calendar 261, Senate Bill 233. Also on page 8, Calendar 254, Senate Bill 178. Page 8, Calendar 263, Senate Bill 252. Page 9, Calendar 274, Senate Bill 244. Page 9, Calendar 283, Senate Bill 306. Page 10, Calendar 294, Senate Bill 283. Also on page 10, Calendar 297, Senate Bill 372. Page 11, Calendar 302, Senate Bill 436. Page 11, Calendar 309, Senate Bill 398. Page 12, Calendar 314, Senate Bill 103. On page 23, Calendar 420, House Bill 5350. Page 27, Calendar 70, Senate Bill 72. Page 28, Calendar 87, Senate Bill 107. Page 29, Calendar 126. Senate Bill 197. Page 30, Calendar 150, Senate Bill 161. Page 32, Calendar 199, Senate Bill 20. And page 35, Calendar 270, Senate Bill 288.

cf
SENATE

254
April 20, 2016

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you please call a roll call vote on the Consent Calendar? The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate Roll Call has been ordered in the Senate.
Immediate Roll Call on today's Consent Calendar has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Fonfara.

All members have voted, all members have voted. The machine will be closed. 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 Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	35
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

The Consent Calendar passes. Senator Duff.

SENATOR DUFF (25TH):

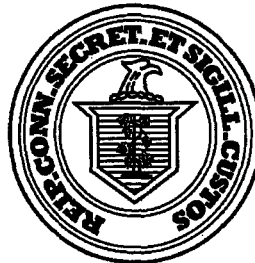
Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, does the clerk have Senate Agenda Number 2 on his desk?

**JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS**

**GOVERNMENT
ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS
PART 2
469 – 1086**

2016

PG 1, Line 2



**GAE Committee
Public Hearing
February 29, 2016**

SB254
SB255
SB257

TESTIMONY OF SECRETARY OF THE STATE DENISE W. MERRILL REGARDING:

- Raised Bill 5387, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CIRCULATION OF NOMINATING PETITIONS
- House Bill 5388, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE IN THE TOWN OF BROOKLYN
- House Bill 5390, AN ACT CONCERNING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS AND OPINIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE
- House Bill 5391, AN ACT CONCERNING THE HANDLING OF VOTER AFFIDAVITS
- House Bill 5392, AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING BY THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE REGARDING MOTOR VEHICLES LICENSES
- House Bill 5393, AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION
- House Bill 5394, ACT CONCERNING ENDORSEMENTS OF TOWN COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
- Senate Bill 250, AN ACT CONCERNING HOURS OF ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION
- Senate Bill 251, AN ACT CONCERNING REPORTING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS
- Senate Bill 252, AN ACT CONCERNING POST-ELECTION AUDIT INTEGRITY AND EFFICIENCY

- **Senate Bill 254, AN ACT CONCERNING SATURDAY REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SESSIONS**
- **Senate Bill 255, AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY AND PROVISION OF TRAINING FOR REGISTRARS OF VOTERS**
- **Raised Bill 257, AN ACT CONCERNING REMOVAL FROM PARTY ENROLLMENT LISTS AND DENIAL OF PRIVILEGES**

Good morning Chairman Cassano, Chairman Jutila, Ranking Members McLachlan and Smith and members of the committee. My name is Denise Merrill and I am the Secretary of the State of Connecticut. I would like to address a number of bills before the committee this morning.

- **Raised Bill 5387, AN ACT CONCERNING THE CIRCULATION OF NOMINATING PETITIONS**

This bill would enable out-of-state residents to circulate petitions on behalf of candidates seeking placement on the ballot as the nominee of a petitioning party. I support this bill.

Under Connecticut law, candidates may appear on the ballot as nominees of a “major party,” a “minor party” or as the nominee of a petitioning party. There are thresholds for each. For example, a major party is defined by its share of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor (20 percent) or having “a number of enrolled members on the active registry list equal to at least twenty per cent of the total number of enrolled members of all political parties on the active registry list of the state.”

So-called minor parties face similar, albeit lesser, thresholds, namely that their candidates for office received “at the last-preceding regular election for such office, under the designation of that political party or organization, at least one per cent of the whole number of votes cast for all candidates for such office at such election.” (CGS Sec. 9-372(6)).

Candidates nominated by major and minor parties may be placed on election ballots without the prior approval of the Secretary of the State—in the latter’s case—as long as the parties certify and file the candidates’ nominations with the registrars of voters within a certain timeframe. In the case of a candidate attempting to get on the ballot as the nominee of a petitioning party, the candidate must collect signatures from registered Connecticut voters. The number of signatures needed equals the lesser of either “one per cent of the votes cast for the same office or offices at the last-preceding election... or (2) seven thousand five hundred” (CGS Sec. 9-453d) or with procedures described by Connecticut Gen. Statute 9-380 in the case of newly created offices.

A person who collects these signatures is called a circulator, defined as “a United States citizen, at least eighteen years of age and a resident of a town in this state and shall not be on parole for conviction of a felony,” according to Connecticut Gen. Statute 9-453e.

We recognize that towns can't budget for post-election audits because they are randomly selected. We hope our new initiative will give towns some relief.

This bill adds new requirements, including a hand-counting process that would be in addition to these new machines. That would seem to be duplicative in addition to promoting the perception that a newly adopted technology is incapable of independently evaluating a tabulator. It also would undermine an initial rationale for adopting this technology, which is to spare the towns' time and expense.

Moreover, the bill adds a new role to the Secretary of the State's office, which is to receive all detailed information from local authorities to put on our website, organized in each district by voting tabulator counts, manual counts, write-in counts and total number of voters checked on the official checklist, as well as by absentee ballot counts, election day registration counts and moderators' returns. This is a new function of our office and will require increased resources to execute.

- **Senate Bill 254, AN ACT CONCERNING SATURDAY REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SESSIONS**

This bill would eliminate a mandated Saturday session, the third week before the day of each state or municipal election, for registrars of voters to be available for enrollment and other services. I support this bill.

This statute provided a guarantee of public access to voter registration in a time when it was really needed. However, we now have the convenience of online voter registration and there is far less need for this mandatory session. This bill does retain the mandatory session on the week before Election Day and two weeks before primary day, which we feel is sufficient.

- **Senate Bill 255, AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICABILITY AND PROVISION OF TRAINING FOR REGISTRARS OF VOTERS**

This bill would eliminate my office's ability to delegate certain trainings for purposes of certification to a third party. I oppose this bill.

A major problem I have with this bill is that creates a very difficult situation with respect to trainings. Trainings are often needed with new pieces of technology, and the vendors are simply the best trainers. Under the proposal, it does not appear that we would be able to delegate to them. In addition, UCONN's School of Business currently carries out statutorily required certification training for all the towns' registrars of voters. We would be deeply concerned about the future of this program if this bill were to pass.

In addition, if all these trainings were moved in-house, there would be significant funding needs for my agency.

All that said, there is some confusion about the number of hours of training required. We had intended eight and are drafting language to that effect.



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TOWN OF
GREENWICH

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS
Fred DeCaro III

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February 26, 2016

Chairman Cassano, Chairman Jutila, and all members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Registrars of Voters of the Town of Greenwich, Sharon Vecchiolla, and Fred DeCaro III.

Regarding HB 5391, AN ACT CONCERNING THE HANDLING OF VOTER AFFIDAVITS

We can supply instances where voters who have been reactivated at the polls and a week later the confirmation letter we sent them is returned stating they do not live at the address provided. These affidavits go hand in hand with that problem. The affidavits are often abused by people who simply forget their wallet in the car, and do not want to walk back to the parking lot. We support a process which reduces opportunities for fraud, and encourages the voter to take more responsibility, and act with the same responsibility as the millions of voters who do come appropriately prepared on election day

Regarding HB 5392, AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING BY THE SECRETARY OF THE STATE REGARDING MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSES

We support such training. Last year, we had not received a sample image of these licenses a week prior to the election. Fortunately ROVAC was able to send out a copy of these licenses when the Secretary of the State's Office was having technical difficulties.

Registrars train their poll workers and staff well in advance of an election. We can provide other examples where the instructions from the Secretary of the State come within a week of a major election. We encourage anything that requires the Secretary of the State to more properly plan their training well in advance.

Regarding SB 251 AN ACT CONCERNING REPORTING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS

We support this bill and encourage its passage.

SB253SB254

Regarding SB 253 **AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES**

We respect the desire of some to save money by consolidating polling places for primaries. We believe that the ability for a registrar to consolidate polling places for a primary can lead to mischief, and believe the Governor was correct to veto similar legislation in previous years. The best way to encourage turnout at all election is to have consistency in the location of polling places.

Regarding SB 254, **AN ACT CONCERNING SATURDAY REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SESSIONS**

Our senior Registrar, Sharon Vecchiolla, with more than 25 years in the position, can attest that this session is not effective at registering voters. We support removing this registration session.

Thank you.

Fred DeCaro III

Republican Registrar of Voters

Sharon Vecchiolla

Democratic Registrar of Voter