



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Supporting
Senate Bill 411, An Act Extending the
Hours of Election Day Registration**

Senator McLachlan, Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Kaley Lentini, and I am legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 411, An Act Extending the Hours of Election Day Registration, which would clarify and strengthen Connecticut law regarding Election Day registration. As an organization committed to the liberties guaranteed by our Constitution, the ACLU-CT strongly supports a free and fair voting system to uphold the foundational cornerstone of our democracy: the right to vote. We therefore support this measure, which would provide more people with the opportunity to participate in elections in Connecticut.

We support liberty, justice, and equality for all, including equal access to the ballot box. By providing more people with the chance to make their voices heard, Election Day registration upholds these critical democratic principles. Turning Election Day registrants away from voting, however, reduces the number of Connecticut residents who can vote and weakens our democracy. It disproportionately harm minorities, immigrants, the poor, and people who live in cities.

To be clear, we believe that current Connecticut law already allows anyone in line to register to vote by 8 p.m. on Election Day to cast a ballot that day. As the Secretary of the State issued incorrect guidance to registrars in 2016, however, it is clear that Connecticut law would benefit from the additional clarity that this bill would provide.

In November 2016, 30,000 people in Connecticut registered to vote on Election Day. Despite being in line to register by 8 p.m., many people were turned away from the polls, unable to cast their ballots. News reports, for instance, cited at least 50 people in New Haven who were in line to register to vote by 8 p.m. but were turned away, and a similar number in Meriden.

There are many good reasons why someone would need to register to vote on Election Day. These voters deserve an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy. I urge you to support Senate Bill 411.