



Legislative Testimony
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**Written Testimony Opposing
Senate Bill 234, An Act Concerning Voter Privacy Protection**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Ranking Members Sampson and France, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Kelly McConney Moore, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I submit this testimony opposing Senate Bill 234, An Act Concerning Voter Privacy Protection. We strongly encourage the Committee to oppose this bill.

The ACLU-CT believes that people should not be required to give up one fundamental right—the right to privacy—in order to exercise another—the right to vote. Senate Bill 234 represents a significant improvement over a similar bill raised last year, but since it still allows the government to discriminate in providing information to people who may lawfully obtain it on the basis of their motives, it still raises serious First Amendment concerns. We believe the best solution to the tension between the right to privacy and the right to vote has a simple solution: allowing voters to opt-out of data disclosure.

Rather than restricting who has access to voter registration information, the Committee could protect the privacy of voters by allowing voters to sign a statement to the Secretary of the State requesting nondisclosure of their names and addresses from the official registry list, for any reason. The ACLU-CT believes that every voter should have the right to protect their privacy while also exercising their right to vote. We view these two rights as equally important to the people of Connecticut. The exercise of a person's right to vote does not, and should not, waive their right to privacy. To this end, we encourage the committee to include in the bill a provision to allow all voters the opportunity to protect their privacy by requesting that their name and address not be disclosed on the official registry.

The ACLU-CT believes that remaining data, which is not unavailable because of voter opt-outs, should be available to everyone. However, the bill's language prevents people from accessing that data if they intend to use the information for a commercial purpose. Access to voter registration information should not be limited to those who will use it for purposes the government finds acceptable. We believe that individuals that access voter registration information should have the right to use that information in legal ways they see fit. Furthermore, people who request access to the information should not be forced to disclose their intended use of the information. This would dissuade people from requesting the information.

Though we are opposed to Senate Bill 234 as it is written, the ACLU-CT encourages this committee to improve upon this well-intentioned proposal by adopting stronger privacy provisions, balanced with better First Amendment protections, to safeguard voters' privacy while allowing access to information that should be public.