



Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 241, An Act Concerning Auditing of Election Day Registration

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 in opposition to Senate Bill 241, An Act Concerning Auditing of Election Day Registration. We strongly encourage the Committee to oppose this bill.

As an organization committed to the liberties guaranteed by our Constitution, the ACLU-CT strongly supports a fair and accessible voting system to uphold the cornerstone of our democracy: the right to vote. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 241 is a burdensome, unnecessary, and vote-discouraging solution in search of problem. Senate Bill 241 would require the addition of multiple responsibilities for election workers on Election Day, the creation of additional and unnecessary processes, and the performance of additional investigations; most importantly, it would chill voting.

Senate Bill 241 would require that people be administered an oath that they have not yet voted, one at a time. This provision would reduce the number of people who could register to vote and vote on Election Day, hindering their right to have their voices heard. Compounding this problem, Connecticut has faced overcrowding issues in recent elections. In November 2016, nearly 30,000 people in Connecticut registered to vote on Election Day.¹ Unfortunately, many people were turned away from the polls, unable to cast their ballots, even when they were in line to register to

¹ Tony Terzi, "Nearly 30,000 People Use Connecticut Same-Day Registration." Fox 61 (Nov. 7, 2016), available at <https://www.fox61.com/article/news/local/outreach/awareness-months/thousands-use-connecticut-same-day-registration/520-cdf39a39-9075-4e8c-a26a-29c7107e794b>.

vote by 8 p.m.² This problem recurred in 2018, when voters who were still in line to register at 8 p.m. were deemed ineligible.³ Requiring that the oath be administered one person at a time would exponentially increase the amount of time people would have to wait in line to register and vote, which may dissuade people from staying at polling locations.

This bill would also prohibit someone from registering to vote and voting unless there were an affirmative report that they had not voted elsewhere. This requirement would create additional and unnecessary documentation on Election Day, slow down the voting process, and ensure confusion at the polls. With a limited amount of time to vote on Election Day, the provision would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to implement. It does not make sense to have election workers keep track of who has not voted, rather than who has. Additionally, this would dissuade voting because it would cause congestion at the polls.

Senate Bill 241 would weaken our democracy and disproportionately harm minorities, immigrants, the poor, and people who live in cities. We encourage the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 241.

² *See id.*; *see also* Thea DiGiammerino, “Long Lines for Same-Day Registration in New Haven.” NBC CT (Nov. 6, 2018), *available at* <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/politics/long-lines-for-same-day-registration-in-new-haven-may-not-move-fast-enough-for-voters/162362/>.

³ “New Haven Officials Overrun by Residents, Students Trying to Register to Vote.” CT Post (Nov. 6, 2018), *available at* <https://www.ctpost.com/politics/article/Decision-day-Polls-now-open-across-Connecticut-13366043.php>.