



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town of Harwinton

***GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION & ELECTIONS
COMMITTEE***

March 17, 2021

Good Afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 5883 "An Act Concerning Voting for Municipal Officers and on Local Questions."

H.B. 5883 "An Act Concerning Voting for Municipal Officers and on Local Questions"

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed H.B. 5883 "An Act Concerning Voting for Municipal Officers and on Local Questions." The Town of Harwinton is opposed to proposed bill H.B. 5883. The bill's main purpose is to permit sixteen-year-olds to vote at elections and primaries of local officers and on local questions, however why this bill does not mention state and federal elections is curious in itself.

Our children today have so much on their plates as it is; virtual learning, worrying about getting their drivers license, where they will go to school, how they will pay for school, where they will work, etc. When do we allow kids to just be kids? This bill proposes that sixteen-year-olds will be able research current issues, are actively aware of the effect of the issues on themselves, or aware of how the community is impacted by issues that they don't even fully understand or have the time to research. Developmentally, they may not fully comprehend the long-term effects of voting one way or another but yet they will have to live with the outcome of casting their vote.

The State of Connecticut requires one to be eighteen years old to run for office. The State does not trust sixteen-year-olds to drive the first six months after getting their license with passengers, only after driving six months are, they allowed to drive only family members (no friends),

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The State doesn't trust them to operate a hands-free phone while driving. The State of Connecticut

doesn't allow sixteen-year-olds to work at certain places of employment (for example pharmacies) until they are eighteen. A child's brain is not even fully developed until twenty-five years of age. With all of this said, I can't imagine why a bill would be proposed to have a minor make fundamental decisions when the state doesn't even trust them with basic responsibilities. There should be a bill to propose that sixteen-year-olds learn how to balance a checkbook, keep a budget, learn about healthcare benefits & retirement plans, learn vehicle emergency protocols, etc. as these skill sets build responsible and reliable citizens. Why are we asking our children to grow up so fast without first developing basic life skills? Over the years, we have failed our children in so many areas, but now we want to bury them with the burden of voting at sixteen years old? This bill is nothing more than irresponsible, ill-drafted and with little care or thought for our children.

We ask that the committee take no action on this bill and if they must, vote no.

The Town of Harwinton is opposed to H.B. 5883. Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

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General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Proposed Bill No. 5883

LCO No. 1845



* 0 1 8 4 5 *

Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS

Introduced by:

REP. ELLIOTT, 88th Dist.
REP. JOHNSON, 49th Dist.
REP. SIMMONS, 144th Dist.
SEN. HASKELL, 26th Dist.

REP. ZIOGAS, 79th Dist.
REP. PHIPPS, 100th Dist.
SEN. LOPES, 6th Dist.

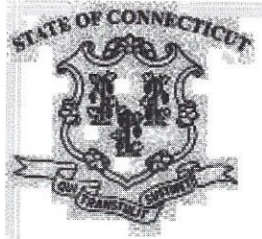
**AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICERS AND ON
LOCAL QUESTIONS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

- 1 That title 9 of the general statutes be amended to provide that any
- 2 individual who has attained the age of sixteen years may vote for the
- 3 municipal officers, and on local questions, in the municipality of which
- 4 such individual is a bona fide resident.

Statement of Purpose:

To permit sixteen year olds to vote at elections and primaries of
municipal officers and on local questions.



General Assembly

January Session, 2021

Committee Bill No. 5883

LCO No. 4894



* 0 4 8 9 4 H B 0 5 8 8 3 G A E *

Referred to Committee on GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION
AND ELECTIONS

Introduced by:
(GAE)

**AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICERS AND ON
LOCAL QUESTIONS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Any municipality may, by
2 ordinance, permit bona fide residents of such municipality who have
3 attained the age of sixteen years, but who have not attained the age of
4 eighteen years, to vote (1) at any regular or special municipal election
5 for only the officers of such municipality or at any primary for only the
6 nomination of candidates for such officers, and (2) at any referendum
7 for any question or proposal of only such municipality.
- 8 (b) In the case of any election or primary described in subdivision (1)
9 of subsection (a) of this section and any referendum described in
10 subdivision (2) of said subsection, the provisions of title 9 of the general
11 statutes relating to the conduct of and voting at any such election,
12 primary or referendum by electors, including, but not limited to,
13 admission to voting privileges and inclusion on registry and enrollment
14 lists, voting by absentee ballot and signature of petitions, shall apply
15 equally to the conduct of and voting at any such election, primary or

16 referendum by minor municipal voters, as described in said subsection
17 and defined in section 9-1 of the general statutes, as amended by this
18 act.

19 (c) The registrars of voters of any municipality described in
20 subsection (a) of this section shall ensure that, in the case of any election
21 or primary described in subdivision (1) of said subsection and any
22 referendum described in subdivision (2) of said subsection, the ballot
23 used by minor municipal voters at any such election, primary or
24 referendum only permits voting in accordance with said subsection.

25 Sec. 2. Section 9-1 of the general statutes is repealed and the following
26 is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

27 Except as otherwise provided, the following terms, as used in this
28 title and sections 3-124, 7-5, 7-6, 7-7, 7-17, 7-20, 7-39, 7-157, 7-214, 7-275,
29 7-295, 7-343, 7-407, 8-1, 8-5, 8-19, 10-219, 11-36, 13a-11, 30-10, 30-11, 45a-
30 18, 45a-19 and 51-95 have the following meanings:

31 (a) "Ballot" means paper or other material containing the names of the
32 candidates or a statement of a proposed constitutional amendment or
33 other question or proposition to be voted on;

34 (b) "Board for admission of electors" means the board as composed
35 under subsection (a) of section 9-15a;

36 (c) "Clerical error" means any error in the registry list or enrollment
37 list due to a mistake or an omission on the part of the printer or a mistake
38 or omission made by the registrars or their assistants;

39 (d) "Election" means any [electors'] meeting at which the electors and,
40 when permitted by ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of this act,
41 minor municipal voters choose public officials by use of voting
42 tabulators or by paper ballots as provided in section 9-272;

43 (e) "Elector" means any person possessing the qualifications
44 prescribed by the Constitution and duly admitted to, and entitled to
45 exercise, the privileges of an elector in a town;

- 46 (f) Repealed by P.A. 77-298, S. 14;
- 47 (g) "Municipal clerk" means the clerk of a municipality;
- 48 (h) "Municipal election" means the regularly recurring election held
49 in a municipality at which the electors and, when permitted by
50 ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of this act, minor municipal
51 voters of the municipality choose public officials of such municipality;
- 52 (i) "Municipality" means any city, borough or town within the state;
- 53 (j) "Official ballot" means the official ballot to be used at an election,
54 or the official ballot to be used thereat in accordance with the provisions
55 of section 9-272;
- 56 (k) "Population" means the population according to the last-
57 completed United States census;
- 58 (l) "Presidential electors" means persons elected to cast their ballots
59 for President and Vice President of the United States;
- 60 (m) "Print" means methods of duplication of words by mechanical
61 process, but shall not include typewriting;
- 62 (n) "Referendum" means (1) a question or proposal which is
63 submitted to a vote of the electors, [or] voters or, when permitted by
64 ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of this act, minor municipal
65 voters of a municipality at any regular or special state or municipal
66 election, as defined in this section, (2) a question or proposal which is
67 submitted to a vote of the electors, [or] voters or, when permitted by
68 ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of this act, minor municipal
69 voters, as the case may be, of a municipality at a meeting of such
70 electors, [or] voters or minor municipal voters, which meeting is not an
71 election, as defined in subsection (d) of this section, and is not a town
72 meeting, or (3) a question or proposal which is submitted to a vote of
73 the electors, [or] voters or, when permitted by ordinance adopted
74 pursuant to section 1 of this act, minor municipal voters, as the case may
75 be, of a municipality at a meeting of such electors, [or] voters or minor

76 municipal voters pursuant to section 7-7 or pursuant to charter or
77 special act;

78 (o) "Regular election" means any state or municipal election;

79 (p) "Registrars" means the registrars of voters of the municipality;

80 (q) "Registry list" means the list of electors of any municipality
81 certified by the registrars;

82 (r) "Special election" means any election not a regular election;

83 (s) "State election" means the election held in the state on the first
84 Tuesday after the first Monday in November in the even-numbered
85 years in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of
86 Connecticut;

87 (t) "State officers" means the Governor, Lieutenant Governor,
88 Secretary of the State, Treasurer, Comptroller and Attorney General;

89 (u) "Voter" means a person qualified to vote at town and district
90 meetings under the provisions of section 7-6 and includes, when
91 permitted by ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of this act, a
92 minor municipal voter;

93 (v) "Voting district" means any municipality, or any political
94 subdivision thereof, having not more than one polling place in a regular
95 election;

96 (w) "Voting tabulator" means a machine, including, but not limited
97 to, a device which operates by electronic means, for the registering and
98 recording of votes cast at elections, primaries and referenda;

99 (x) "Write-in ballot" means a vote cast for any person whose name
100 does not appear on the official ballot as a candidate for the office for
101 which the person's name is written in;

102 (y) "The last session for admission of electors prior to an election"
103 means the day which is the seventh day prior to an election; and

104 (z) "Minor municipal voter" means any person qualified, under the
105 provisions of section 1 of this act, to vote (1) at any regular or special
106 municipal election for only the officers of such municipality or at any
107 primary for only the nomination of candidates for such officers, and (2)
108 at any referendum for any question or proposal of only such
109 municipality.

110 Sec. 3. Section 9-372 of the general statutes is repealed and the
111 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

112 The following terms, as used in this chapter, chapter 157 and sections
113 9-51 to 9-67, inclusive, 9-169e, 9-217, 9-236 and 9-361, shall have the
114 following meanings:

115 (1) "Caucus" means any meeting, at a designated hour and place, or
116 at designated hours and places, of the enrolled members of a political
117 party within a municipality or political subdivision thereof for the
118 purpose of selecting party-endorsed candidates for a primary to be held
119 by such party or for the purpose of transacting other business of such
120 party;

121 (2) "Convention" means a meeting of delegates of a political party
122 held for the purpose of designating the candidate or candidates to be
123 endorsed by such party in a primary of such party for state or district
124 office or for the purpose of transacting other business of such party;

125 (3) "District" means any geographic portion of the state which crosses
126 the boundary or boundaries between two or more towns;

127 (4) "District office" means an elective office for which only the electors
128 in a district, as defined in subdivision (3) of this section, may vote;

129 (5) "Major party" means (A) a political party or organization whose
130 candidate for Governor at the last-preceding election for Governor
131 received, under the designation of that political party or organization,
132 at least twenty per cent of the whole number of votes cast for all
133 candidates for Governor, or (B) a political party having, at the last-
134 preceding election for Governor, a number of enrolled members on the

135 active registry list equal to at least twenty per cent of the total number
136 of enrolled members of all political parties on the active registry list in
137 the state;

138 (6) "Minor party" means a political party or organization which is not
139 a major party and whose candidate for the office in question received at
140 the last-preceding regular election for such office, under the designation
141 of that political party or organization, at least one per cent of the whole
142 number of votes cast for all candidates for such office at such election;

143 (7) "Municipal office" means an elective office for which only the
144 electors and, when permitted by ordinance adopted pursuant to section
145 1 of this act, minor municipal voters, as defined in section 9-1, as
146 amended by this act, of a single town, city, borough, or political
147 subdivision, as defined in subdivision (10) of this section, may vote,
148 including the office of justice of the peace;

149 (8) "Party designation committee" means an organization, composed
150 of at least twenty-five members who are electors, which has, on or after
151 November 4, 1981, reserved a party designation with the Secretary of
152 the State pursuant to the provisions of this chapter;

153 (9) "Party-endorsed candidate" means (A) in the case of a candidate
154 for state or district office, a person endorsed by the convention of a
155 political party as a candidate in a primary to be held by such party, and
156 (B) in the case of a candidate for municipal office or for member of a
157 town committee, a person endorsed by the town committee, caucus or
158 convention, as the case may be, of a political party as a candidate in a
159 primary to be held by such party;

160 (10) "Political subdivision" means any voting district or combination
161 of voting districts constituting a part of a municipality;

162 (11) "Primary" means a meeting of (A) the enrolled members of a
163 political party and, when applicable under section 9-431, unaffiliated
164 electors, held during consecutive hours at which such members or
165 electors may, without assembling at the same hour, vote by secret ballot

166 for candidates for nomination to office or for town committee members,
167 and (B) when permitted by ordinance adopted pursuant to section 1 of
168 this act, minor municipal voters held during consecutive hours at which
169 such minor municipal voters may, without assembling at the same hour,
170 vote by secret ballot for candidates for nomination to municipal office
171 or for town committee members;

172 (12) "Registrar" means the registrar of voters in a municipality who is
173 enrolled with the political party holding a primary and, in each
174 municipality where there are different registrars for different voting
175 districts, means the registrar so enrolled in the voting district in which,
176 at the last-preceding regular election, the presiding officer for the
177 purpose of declaring the result of the vote of the whole municipality was
178 moderator;

179 (13) "Slate" means a group of candidates for nomination by a political
180 party to the office of justice of the peace of a town, which group numbers
181 at least a bare majority of the number of justices of the peace to be
182 nominated by such party for such town;

183 (14) "State office" means any office for which all the electors of the
184 state may vote and includes the office of Governor, Lieutenant
185 Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Comptroller, Attorney General and
186 senator in Congress, but does not include the office of elector of
187 President and Vice-President of the United States;

188 (15) "Votes cast for the same office at the last-preceding election" or
189 "votes cast for all candidates for such office at the last-preceding
190 election" means, in the case of multiple openings for the same office, the
191 total number of electors and, when permitted by ordinance adopted
192 pursuant to section 1 of this act, minor municipal voters checked as
193 having voted at the last-preceding election at which such office
194 appeared on the ballot.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	9-1
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	9-372

Statement of Purpose:

To permit individuals who have attained the age of sixteen years, but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, to vote at elections and primaries of municipal officers and on local questions.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]

Co-Sponsors: REP. ELLIOTT, 88th Dist.; REP. JOHNSON, 49th Dist.
 REP. SIMMONS, 144th Dist.; SEN. HASKELL, 26th Dist.
 REP. ZIOGAS, 79th Dist.; REP. PHIPPS, 100th Dist.
 SEN. LOPES, 6th Dist.; REP. DILLON, 92nd Dist.
 REP. SIMMS, 140th Dist.

H.B. 5883