



DANNEL P. MALLOY
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 6, 2012

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of the State
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I hereby return, without my signature, substitute Senate Bill 218, *An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries*. This bill allows for changes to the location and number of polling places for primaries at the discretion of Town Registrars. Although I understand that this bill may result in potential cost savings to municipalities, the potential for undermining the right to vote contained in the bill is unacceptable. Indeed, voters may be easily confused and reluctant to vote if their polling place is suddenly closed during a primary process. There is no provision in this bill for input from citizens prior to the registrars' closing of a polling place to express their concerns or to suggest alternative locations for such polling locations. We strive as a democracy to give voters every opportunity to vote – and they should be afforded the opportunity to vote at their normal polling place – even in an uncontested election. Given the importance of ready access to the polls and my commitment to ensuring every eligible citizen their ability to vote, I cannot support this bill.

The timeframe for choosing the polling stations provided for in the bill does not provide adequate notice to candidates and voters, particularly when an objection is filed. Candidates would no longer be able to include the location of the polling stations in their campaign literature because of the potential for change, leaving voters less informed as to the location of the polling places. There is also a high potential for confusion on the part of the voters if polling locations are changed. Voters who go to the wrong polling place may not have the ability to reach an alternate location due to transportation or time constraints. Additionally, the potential for having two different polling locations for a primary election and a general election in the same election cycle could cause significant confusion for members of the voting public.

Separate from my concerns regarding the relocation of polling locations, I do not have confidence that the procedure set out in Section 2 of the bill for removal of registrars of voters

from office is advisable. In particular, the procedure set forth does not establish any standards by which a judge could determine whether to remove a registrar from office, and effectively overturn the results of an election. Rather, the bill simply indicates that a judge could remove such a registrar if the judge "is of the opinion that the evidence presented warrants the removal of such registrar of voters." Additionally, the bill does not make it clear that such a removal order is a judgment of the court, or that a registrar so removed could appeal such an order to either the Appellate or Supreme Court. A procedure to remove an elected official from office, regardless of what office that is, must be rigorous, effective and in accordance with traditional notions of due process. The procedures set forth in this bill do not meet that test.

For these reasons, I disapprove of substitute Senate Bill 218, *An Act Concerning Polling Places for Primaries*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning substitute Senate Bill 218 without my signature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. P. Malloy". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor