

Government Oversight Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1409

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN FINANCE FILINGS.

Vote Date: 3/18/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/6/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Oversight Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would require that municipal campaign registration and disclosure documents be filed with the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) instead of each municipality's town clerk. Currently, each municipal campaign must file their documents with the town clerk for their municipality; with no centralized system to access these filings and one hundred and sixty-nine different municipalities, this has raised concerns about the transparency and efficiency of the election filing system. After a pilot program in 2017 testing the use of SEEC's filing system in twenty municipalities for their municipal elections showed that the volume of campaign filings that would fall under SEEC would not be a significant increase in workload, this bill seeks to centralize the campaign filing for municipal elections of all municipalities in the state.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Shannon Kief: Legal Program Director, State Elections Enforcement Commission:

Ms. Kief expressed her support for this bill on behalf of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. She pointed out that with the current duty of filing municipal elections and local referenda falling into the hands of the 169 town clerks, local election records are neither transparent nor easily accessible. She explained that SEEC would need very few additional resources to take over the task by 2029 – the timeline proposed in this bill – and that expanding availability of the existing eCRIS system to local elections would ease the burden on town clerks.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Mark Bernacki: Legislative Chari, Connecticut Town Clerks Association:

Mr. Bernacki expressed his support for this bill and pointed to the success of the 2017 pilot program that made eCRIS available to municipal campaigns in twenty towns. He hailed the increased transparency measures provided by this bill and requested that the committee change the bill to ensure that it would be available during the 2027 municipal election cycle.

Pamela Klem: Campaign Finance Specialist, League of Women Voters: Ms. Klem expressed her support for this bill, explaining that the League of Women Voters believes in government efficiency where possible. She noted that expanding eCRIS to municipal elections would increase transparency while simultaneously streamlining the campaign filing system.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 3/24/2025