

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5544 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT ALLOWING MUNICIPALITIES TO HOLD MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN
Title: CONJUNCTION WITH STATE ELECTIONS.

Vote Date: 3/23/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/18/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill allows municipalities to hold municipalities on the same year as state elections are held. In doing so, the bill seeks to increase turnout for municipal elections by ensuring that voters who only vote in even-numbered years still get the chance to vote in municipal elections. Allowing municipalities to move their elections to even-numbered years would also let financial incumbered towns and cities relieve the financial burden of having to pay for the administration of elections in even- and odd-numbered years.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Stephanie Thomes, Secretary of the State, Office of the Secretary of the State:](#)

Secretary Thomas expressed her support for this bill with changes, noting that allowing for the alignment of municipal elections with higher-turnout state elections could increase voter participation. She pointed out that while consolidating a municipal election to the same year as the state election could have the potential to decrease voter confusion, failing to notify voters of this change ahead of time would inevitably result in even more confusion. As such, she requested that the committee add a provision requiring municipalities to notify voters well in advance of the first affected election.

[Ryan M. Burns, Executive Director and General Counsel, State Elections Enforcement Commission:](#)

Mr. Burns offered no comment on the policy change presented on this bill but explained that it would pose challenges to the state's current campaign finance system. He pointed out that if a candidate were to run for state and municipal office in the same year, that candidate would have to create two candidate committees, one for each campaign. This

would effectively multiply the contribution limit for that candidate, while also making it difficult to track which expenditures came from which campaign committee.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Randall Collins, Associate Director, Connecticut Council of Municipalities: Mr. Collins expressed his support for this bill, noting the chronically low voter turnout rates and largely unnecessary costs in municipal elections. He applauded the solution provided in this bill, allowing municipalities to move their municipal elections to the same year as state elections, and asserted that this provision would allow town and cities to save expenses associated with having elections in odd-numbered years as well as even-numbered years.

Samuel S. Gold, Executive Director, Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments: Mr. Gold expressed his support for this bill, asserting that it would raise the profile of municipal elections and increase voter turnout while also reducing election-associated costs for municipalities.

Marina Pino, Counsel, Brennan Center for Justice: Ms. Pino expressed her support for this bill, noting that other neighboring states like New York have already adopted this measure. She pointed out turnout rates as low as 5 percent in certain cities' municipal elections, and she cited a 2021 study showing that shifting municipal elections to the same year as state elections has a significant impact on voter turnout. She noted increases in turnout in Baltimore, Los Angeles, Austin, El Paso, and Corpus Christi following their first even-numbered municipal elections, and she demonstrated similar increases in a number of Californian cities. She also pointed out that Connecticut municipalities could save money on elections by consolidating their municipal elections to even-numbered years, and provided data from the New York City Independent Budget Office to back this up.

Neal Ubriani, Chief of Policy, Institute for Responsive Government Action: Mr. Ubriani expressed his support for this bill, asserting that it is a pragmatic reform that could significantly increase voter turnout in municipal elections. He pointed out that cities across the country have experienced increases in voter turnout by as much as 40 percentage points, and he noted that municipalities would also experience reduced administrative costs associated with running elections.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Alex Knopp, Former House Chair, Government Administration and Elections Committee: Mr. Knopp expressed his opposition to this bill, asserting that it would convert municipal elections to "second order elections" in which voters would make decisions based on party preferences relative to state elections. He argued that allowing for the rescheduling of municipal elections to the same day as state and federal elections could very easily overshadow and undervalue local elections, and that the monetary relief of only having to pay for the administration of half as many elections was not worth the devaluation of local elections.

Reported by: Sam Sims

Date: 3/31/26