

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** SB-463 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING SECURITY OF ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

**Title:** PROCESSES, ELECTIONS SITES, ELECTION WORKERS AND ELECTORS.

**Vote Date:** 3/23/2026

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/13/2026

**File No.:** 570

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill would create prohibitions and penalties on and for the possession of a firearm or deadly weapon at or near certain elections-related locations. This legislation also enables the Attorney General to be involved in matters relating to election interference. The legislature hopes that by adopting these provisions, voters will feel safer when engaging in the democratic process through voting and encourage broader civic participation.

### SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

Consolidates prohibitions regarding checking voter's qualifications; adds transit exception to law enforcement prohibitions; and adds weather exception to mask prohibition.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

#### **Stephanie Thomas, Secretary of the State, Office of the Secretary of State**

The Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas submitted testimony in support of SB 463. This legislation protects the infrastructure of the election process by maintaining public confidence in Connecticut's elections. She notes that in recent years the election workers have face increased threats across the country. The Secretary of the State notes that though situations such as these have not made their way to Connecticut, it would not be wise to wait until similar problems occur in the state. She states that provisions in this bill strengthen election protections by: establishing clear boundaries around election sites and addressing conduct

that could intimidate voters, creating penalties for the possession of weapons near election sites while preserving exceptions for lawful firearm possession, expanding existing protections for election workers to include assistant municipal clerks; who play an important role in election administration in many municipalities, reinforcing the integrity of election administration processes by establishing penalties for tampering with voting tabulators, addressing interference with absentee ballot drop boxes and ballots, providing for coordination with the Office of the Attorney General when legal requests for election materials arise, and ensuring the state has a clear mechanism to respond if interference occurs in the selection of presidential electors or members of Congress.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Ann Reed, Vice President and Co-Head for Advocacy, League of Women Voters of Connecticut** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that banning guns from polling sites will make election workers feel safer, as it makes it clear that a voter must leave their weapon at home or secure in their car. She noted that this legislation also bars federal agents from being within 250 feet of a polling site unless there is a demonstrated reason and this would protect voters from being intimidated, coerced, or deterred from exercising their right to vote by the presence of federal officers. She shared that this bill also bans the requirement of presenting identification within 250 feet of a polling site, which is important to ensure voters feel secure and free to enter the polling site and cast their votes. Ann emphasized that protecting election workers is important, as officials work hard setting up and carrying out the election processes according to the law. She expressed that those individuals need to do their jobs free from fear of intimidation and coercion, as this is the foundation of our democracy and the voting process should be sacrosanct.

**Lisa Amatruda, ROVAC Legislative Committee, Co-Chair** submitted testimony in support of most of this legislation, except for Section 1. She stated that ROVAC appreciates provisions in the bill that would strengthen criminal penalties for harassment of election workers and for tampering with election equipment. She stated that protecting election officials and safeguarding election infrastructure are critical to maintaining secure and trusted elections.

**Christine Burrill** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that it protects voters and voting places by upholding one of the cornerstones of the democratic system of the right to vote without fear of intimidation or exposure. She stated that this legislation requires the prohibition of face-obscuring masks while making allowances for medical or religious reasons. She added that this does not require people to present identification near a polling site, as this will prevent discrimination or targeting of certain groups who others may not want to vote or may harass. She stated that this legislation would also restrict the sue of force against, conducting searches, detaining, or arresting individuals within 250 feet of an election site by federal or state officers or agents. She emphasized this legislation would also prohibit firearms or deadly weapons near election sites, or other voting-related sites, she shared that she was a permit holder and training is not extensive. She said that rights come with responsibilities and responsible gun ownership is knowing your limits in situations that you are not trained for and could potentially cause more harm. Christine noted that this legislation also creates safeguards election workers and ballots, as election workers have recently faced unprecedented levels of harassment and this bill would give offenders a class A misdemeanor for a first offense, the most serious, non-felony offense. She shared that

Sections 4 and 5 provides needed safeguards for tampering or mishandling of ballots, voting machines or drop boxes, but wants to ensure this is not weaponized against innocent people by bad actors who wrongfully accuse others of some kind of fraudulent activity without basis. Christine expressed that this legislation also provides legal oversight and transparency by providing a check against "fishing expeditions" or unauthorized seizures of election records.

**Felicia DeDominicis** submitted testimony in support of this legislation noting it establishes urgently needed protections for elections, including their fair and free administration, protects citizens' ability to vote without harassment or intimidation, and ensures election workers are protected from threats by people who intend to disrupt elections.

**Dean Delach** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing it is urgently needed to protect our most fundamental right, the right to vote and have free and fair elections. He stated that those who argue this legislation infringes on their rights as gun owners are misplaced, as people cannot carry firearms on airplanes, concerts, or the state capitol building. Dean shared that if guns should not be allowed in those places, then prohibiting them around polling sites is equally or perhaps even more important.

**Holly Greenfield** submitted testimony sharing that as a poll worker in Simsbury, she has seen the care and dedication of her colleagues to protect free and fair elections for all voters and that she supports laws that protect elections and election workers. She emphasized that the state's residents deserve to go to their polling place without fear of voter suppression or intimidation.

**Diane Hoffman** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that as a poll worker in Hamden, she appreciates this legislation to keep polling stations safe for poll workers and voters. She added that it is essential that everyone feels safe to vote in elections and that we can no longer assume that these locations do not need safety measures in place.

**Dorothy Raviele** submitted testimony in support of this legislation noting that as a longtime poll worker, she has seen the atmosphere of polling places change from one of neighborliness and respect to one of suspicion and challenges to the integrity of poll workers. She stated that it is imperative weapons are not allowed near polling places and that poll workers are not threatened, subjected to disrespect, or considered to be complicit in conspiracies. Dorothy shared that we must continue to support transparency and safety in the voting process, and this legislation is a step in that direction.

**Ron Wallace, Retiree** submitted testimony noting that the intent to disrupt the 2026 elections has become evident. Ron shared that forces like ICE and CBP are likely to intimidate voters of any race, creed, or religion to suppress the vote wherever federal forces are. He stated that as the force behind federal forces' presence is firearms, he believes it is a legitimate limitation to carry firearms to protect bystanders. Ron expressed that hopefully this will not dissuade gun carrying voters from voting without their firearms but will rather dissuade lawless federal forces from showing up at polls in the state on election day.

**Andrew Washall** submitted testimony in support of this legislation noting he would feel safer with it enacted. Andrew asked if on Line 81, is "subsection (b)" meant rather than "subsection (a)"?

**Faith Weidner, MD** submitted testimony in support of this legislation sharing that free and fair elections for all Americans is the cornerstone to a viable American democracy. Dr. Weidner stated that the federal government and its enablers have made it clear that only "the right people" should vote to elect "the right people", something she repudiates. She noted that if American democracy is to endure, we need to fight with the key step of safeguarding elections now and in the future, as time is of the essence.

**Carol Williams, Community Foundation of Eastern CT, Trustee** submitted testimony in support of this legislation expressing her concern for the threats to democracy. She shared that she feels fortunate to live in the State of Connecticut, but we cannot be complacent about the threats to voting rights, as we must remain vigilant as a bulwark for democracy. Dr. Williams emphasized that this legislation will ensure that the state's citizens retain their rights to vote in free and fair elections.

**Anonymous** submitted testimony in support of this legislation noting it is important to ensure laws are on the books to deter or prosecute any attempts by individual actors with malicious intent to interfere with a peaceful and orderly election process by showing up at polling places with firearms or other tools of intimidation. They noted that the federal government has decided that the rule of law and Constitutional protections are optional when it comes to the rights of individuals. They stated that certain high-ranking officials in the federal government have not ruled out deploying ICE to polling places during upcoming elections to deter non-citizen voting. They shared that this legislation would also be helpful in holding rogue agents of government at any level with the intention of intimidating voters or interfering with elections, to account for their actions.

The following submitted general support for the bill:

**Evelyn Avoglia**

**Beth Hillson**

**Kathy Purtell**

**Sally Turner**

**Anonymous 84**

**Anonymous 98**

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

##### **Lisa Amatruda, Registrar of Voters, Woodbury:**

Voter intimidation, coercion and interference are already illegal, and this bill does not close a gap in the law, improve voter list accuracy, strengthen ballot processing or address administrative challenges election officials face. The bill introduces broad and potentially confusing language especially presenting identification, placing moderators and local election officials in the difficult position to determine whether the presence of law enforcement is authorized. Do not make voters choose between two equal constitution rights.

##### **Robert Pizzi, President, Central Connecticut Arms LLC:**

My daily life is defined by adherence to ATF regulations and state statutes. This bill ignores the practical realities of responsible firearm ownership in favor of a policy that decreases public security. Open Carry is no longer the law of the land and if a firearm is properly concealed it is physically impossible for that firearm to intimidate anyone. The bill attempts to solve a problem

already addressed. Central Connecticut Arms prides ourselves in being compliant, community and dominant.

**Dr. Antonios Panagiotakis:**

The bill forces a legally armed citizen commuting or running errands on election day that stops to vote forces them to leave their firearm unattended in a vehicle which is a potential liability. These bills target the mere peaceful, concealed possession of a firearm by vetted citizens. Concealed carry permit holders are statistically among the most law-abiding demographics in the state and do not represent a threat to election workers or fellow electors.

**Robert Nyilas:**

The protection of elections workers may be a goal the legislations attempt it infringes on the fundamental Second Amendment rights. The U.S. Supreme Court's decision in NYSPRPA v Bruen made it clear that states may designate "sensitive places" where firearms are restricted. Expanding a "sensitive place" to a 250-foot radius is an unconstitutional overreach. The bill creates temporary "gun-free zones" disarming citizens in the spaces where they are entitled to self-protection.

**Robert Applegate:**

The bill is Constitutionally invalid and overly restrictive causing citizens to violate it while carrying normal daily activities.

**Michael Barton, Hartford:**

The bill forces citizens to choose between to foundational rights, the right to vote or the right to self-defense. We should not have to surrender our right to bear arms just to participate in the democratic process. The CT general Assembly needs to include outside people with knowledge and experience to help find better ways to protect the public.

**Robert Bazinet:**

No citizen should have to choose between their right to vote of give up your right to self-defense. Participating in an election shouldn't require you to temporarily waive your right to bear arms as protected under Article I Section 15 of the Connecticut Constitution. The bill just leaves law-abiding permit holders defenseless.

**Stephen Bennett, New Haven:**

The bill has several troubling sections from limitations to federal law enforcement, to limiting asking for ID and banning facial or head coverings and prohibiting firearms or other self-defense weapons all within 250 feet of an election related location. Some may not be aware of election located locations around them.

**Joshua Benoit:**

These bills are not about election security but the further erosion of the rights of peaceable citizens. By criminalizing the possession of a firearm withing 250 feet of an election site you are forcing citizens to choose between their right to vote and their right to self-defense.

**Alton Blodgett:**

Banning lawful carry at polling locations potentially turns these sites into "soft target". Voter intimidation, harassment and banning a weapon is already a crime so there should be no

indication by anyone that there is a firearm present. This bill targets the mere peaceful. Concealed possession of a firearm by vetted citizens.

**David Brill:**

This bill has nothing to do with the safety of the election site workers and electors. The bill causes citizens to decide between two fundamental rights and makes polling locations "soft targets" and is redundant when it comes to voter intimidation, harassment and brandishing a weapon at voting places.

**Robert Butler, Rockville Fish and Game:**

Data shows that lawful gun owners are not the source of violence at elections sites. The Brennan Center for Justice in 2020 and 2022 found no documented incidents of licensed firearm owners harming voters or election workers at polling locations. There is no evidence that registered firearm owners have posed a threat at Connecticut polling places as a result this proposal attempts to solve a problem that does not exist.

**Howard Coling:**

Bad actors who intend to commit violence or intimidate voters will not be deterred by a statutory location restriction. The last thing the state should do is disarm residents who deserve the opportunity to defend themselves and their families,

**Robert Furce:**

The bill targets the peaceful, concealed possession of a firearm by vetted citizens, conflating legal carry with criminal intimidations. HB 6667 already took away open carry so there should be no indication that there is even a firearm present at a polling place.

**Charles Graffeo, Bethel:**

The Second Amendment protect the right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms. The Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed this protection and established that firearm regulations must be consistent with the historical tradition of firearm regulations in the United States. Further expanding restrictions risks conflicting with the constitution framework articulated by the Supreme Court and would prolong costly litigation for the state and its taxpayers.

**Christian Landazabal:**

As a person who believes in all the amendments, I feel that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment should be protected as much as we protect and support the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment. Perhaps stricter laws regarding how to obtain weapons not dictating what we are allowed to do with our weapons.

**David LaPorte, Ashford, Eastern CT Sportsman Club:**

I have served in the U.S. Army Reserves and been involved with civilian firearms ownership since 1978 and a Life Member of the Second Amendment Foundation belong to the CT Defense League and other organizations and consider myself more firearm experience than the average firearm owner. Non-solutions are being offered to combat non-problem and, in the process, aimed only at the Peaceably Armed Citizens of this state.

**Matt Mazur:**

The proposed legislation is flawed and redundant. In 2023 HB 6667 removed the option of open carry and now everyone must conceal carry by law. Intimidating voters, harassment is

illegal and if someone does something inappropriate there are already law coving those situations.

**Patricia Moore, Warren:**

As a voter and legal permit holder I should not have to surrender my constitutional rights and as a Poll Worker I find solace knowing that there may be legal permit holders carrying where I am working.

**Kyle Potenziani:**

The bill forces law abiding citizens to chose between voting and the right to self-defense. Creating more "gun free zones" helps make people more vulnerable to the actions of bad actors and criminals. The State should be enhancing security, not disarming law abiding voters carrying in polling locations where it is legal to do so. Why has the state been introducing so many bills targeting firearm owners when they should be focused on budgetary issues.

**William Quinn:**

We already have laws concerning criminal behavior of assault, threatening, intimidation etc. Our constitutional rights and self-protecting should not be an abridged and gun free zones created enable criminals to ply their crimes. There are multiple elections during the year and there is no way I can plan a route to travel safely. Our elections must be secure, and the language prevents Federal Law Enforcement from conducting their jobs. The language would conflict with the Supremacy Clause of the United States code.

**Richard Souza, East Hartford:**

I want to protect those who work at the voting stations and the integrity of the voting process, but the bill has serious problems. I object to Section 1 that makes felons out of on-duty federal and state law enforcement officers and Section 2 which attempts to make felons out of honest law-abiding citizens. Announcing 250 feet around poling stations as being "gun free" is not the way to ensure a mass shooting event. We say how effective those zones were at Sandy Hook, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Robb Elementary and Columbine High School. The best way to protect the public is to light law-abiding citizens their right to bear arms concealed.

**Ray Tao, Wilton:**

The bill does not enhance election security but forces citizens to choose between constitutional rights, create soft targets at polling locations, duplicates existing criminal statues and introduces new security risks.

**Pavel Tolkachev, Stamford:**

The provision does not enhance security its restrictions are redundant, forces law-abiding citizens to temporarily surrender state constitutional right to bear arms, vaguely defines election sites, and expansive sensitive place zone has no historical tradition under the Bruen test.

**Carl Webber:**

As a legal gun owner and US Navy veteran I oppose the conflict of fundamental rights, the flaw of gun-free zones, the redundancy of existing laws and the targeting of peaceful citizens.

**Kurt Weisheit, Terryville:**

A 250-foot radius includes over 4.5 acres of land and surrounding any of the places in the bill including a drop box designation for the deposit of absentee ballots could include residential houses, public sidewalks, streets and businesses open to the public. It is absurd to think that a person could know all the locations in every town. Any person lawfully carrying a firearm for self-defense could unknowingly travel into or through one of these zones and become a felon.

The following from the CCDL testified in opposition to the bill:

Keith Cagle, Club Laison

Jeff Fluckiger

Michael Franco

Dr. Walt Kupson

James Parker

William Ploowy

Alex Romero

George Romero

Donna Sabia

Dayna Sabia

Edith Sabia

Heather Sabia

John Sabia

Joseh Sabia

Melanie Sabia

Tony Sabia

Carrie Simpson

Jennifer Suttle

The following also submitted testimony in opposition to the bill:

22 Anonymous and over 65 people

**Reported by: Geva Tinker / Pamela Bianca / Tyler Fisher    Date: April 13, 2026**