AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of 38 million nationwide and approximately 600,000 in Connecticut. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

Honorable Chairs, Ranking Members and members of the GAE Committee, my name is John Erlingheuser and I am the Advocacy and Community Outreach Director for AARP in Connecticut. I am also a former Registrar of Voters, having served the City of Ansonia for 16 years. The right to vote is among the most basic of all civic and Constitutional rights. Recent elections, however, have revealed many flaws and practices that make it more difficult for citizens to vote. These include registration impediments, long lines, lack of early voting opportunities, inadequate facilities, equipment, and staff at polling places, and language barriers, among others.

AARP believes that policies should be enacted that encourage and promote maximum participation in the electoral process. Connecticut should adopt voter registration and voting systems and procedures that expand the range of voting choices for all residents. S.B. 5 would help in facilitating those changes.

AARP supports the following sections:

Sections 3 and 4 expands automatic voter registration to public assistance offices, all offices in the state that provide state-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to persons with disabilities, libraries that are open to the public, and such other appropriate offices as the Secretary of the State shall designate.

Section 5 requires colleges & universities to use electronic voter registration system starting Jan 2022 in addition to traditional voter registration,

Section 6 allows the Secretary of the State to develop and implement a system to permit any person to submit an electronic signature for signing any form or application.

Sections10 through 12 has voters with developmental disabilities certify they meet voter qualifications and allows their legal rep to accompany them in voting booth.
Section 18 allows for the application for an absentee online or through a telephonic system established and maintained by the Secretary for such purpose, provided an applicant's signature is in a database and such signature may be imported into such online system.

Section 19 makes secure absentee ballot drop boxes from the 2020 elections permanent.

Section 20 allows for absentee processing 14 days prior to the election.

Section 21 allows voters with long-term illness to be added to permanent absentee list.

Sections 24 and 25 set up processes for the curing ballots that are returned to the towns that have errors.

Sections 27 allows any municipality to provide a system, approved by the Secretary of the State, for the electronic return of an absentee ballot by any elector.

AARP take no position on other sections of the bill.

Thank you for your time and efforts. I can be reached at jerlingheuser@aarp.org.