

Government Administration and Elections Committee
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5309

AN ACT CONCERNING BALLOTS MADE AVAILABLE IN LANGUAGES OTHER

Title: THAN ENGLISH.

Vote Date: 3/26/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Government Administration & Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill provides that elected municipal leaders can review the accuracy of the translation on a ballot in a language other than English.

The substitute language clarifies the process in which the ballot is reviewed for the accuracy of the translation.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Stephanie Thomas, Connecticut Secretary of The State: Has general concerns that the language of the bill does not clarify which body is tasked with standards for review and does not have guidelines for the vetting process. States that the bill could also present deadline issues for town clerks who will need adequate time to print ballots in other languages. Also states that the Secretary of The State's office requests funding for translating materials into languages other than Spanish and would also like to see this bill require the Secretary of The State to review all ballots before printing.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Cheri Quickmire, Executive Director, Common Cause In CT: Supports this bill because over 22% of the state's population speaks a language other than English at home. States that it is important to do thorough research to make sure the ballots are targeted appropriately.

Antoinette Spinelli, Co-Legislative Chair, CT Town Clerks Association: Supports the intent of the bill but has concerns that not every town will have the necessary expertise in other languages to produce accurate ballots. States that instead of requiring each town to use a third-party vendor, that the current system be used where the Secretary of The State must review all translated election materials.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Mark Cunningham: Opposes this bill and believes that ballot drop-boxes must be removed.

Reported by: Gabriel Marques, Assistant Clerk Date: 4/3/2024