

# Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5466

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERIOD OF TIME DURING WHICH ELECTIONS-  
**Title:** RELATED CRIMES MAY BE PROSECUTED.

**Vote Date:** 3/28/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/13/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Judiciary Committee

## **CO-SPONSORS:**

Rep. Steven J. Stafstrom, 129<sup>th</sup> Dist.

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

It is believed that election integrity is incredibly important for a healthy democracy. When an individual commits an election-related crime, sometimes that crime isn't revealed until the statute of limitations is up. This bill aims to increase the statute of limitations for election-related crimes.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The substitute language models the language around the structure of other criminal statute of limitations.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

***Patrick Griffin, Chief States Attorney, CT Division of Criminal Justice:*** He takes no position on the policy of the bill, but stated that the current language might present potential constitutional problems. He stated that the language “[t]he Division of Criminal Justice shall initiate any prosecution...” has issues with the separation of powers doctrine in it. He proposed substitute language that would be consistent with the statutes of limitation and language proposed in SB 247: *An Act Concerning the Statute of Limitations for Crimes Committed Against the Elderly.*

**Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel Director, CT Office of Chief Public**

**Defender:** She testified in opposition to this bill as they oppose any extension of statutes of limitations in criminal matters.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Gemeem Davis, Co-Director, Bridgeport Generation Now:** She testified in support of this bill and gives the example of the recent crime of absentee ballot fraud in Bridgeport's hotly contested primary election as well as the 2019 absentee ballot scandal; she stated that in those cases, the election crimes related to absentee ballot fraud went "unenforced through criminal prosecution". She believes that if similar acts happen in the future, the case should be referred to the State's Attorney and there must be time to bring people to justice.

**Callie Heilman, Co-Director, Bridgeport Generation Now:** She testified in support of this bill, which gives state prosecutors six months to bring charges of election crimes after the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) concludes an investigation that results in recommendations for criminal charges. She also cited the cases of the 2019 and 2023 absentee ballot fraud instances as examples of reasons for this bill, especially since it took until 2023 to get results from the 2019 case. She further stated that if the SEEC needs years to complete its investigation into election crimes, they should be given appropriate time to bring the charges.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Molly Arabolos, President, CT Criminal Defense Lawyers Association:** She testified in opposition to this bill as she will always oppose any changes to criminal laws that would extend the statute of limitations.

**Reported by:** Hillary Desideraggio

**Date:** 3-21-24