

# Government Administration and Elections Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No:** HB-5344 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

**Title:** AN ACT CONCERNING SUPERIOR COURT VENUE FOR ELECTION CASES.

**Vote Date:** 3/11/2026

**Vote Action:** JOINT FAVORABLE

**PH Date:** 3/4/2026

**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Election law is a highly complex and burdensome form of law that requires a more experienced and educated court. Having the venue for election cases going through certain courts within the state allows for those courts to become experts in election law. This would allow for election cases to be handled more efficiently as there would be a court in the state that would be prepared and experienced to deal with them. Also, election cases are becoming more and more frequent as elections have become more contentious.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

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

The legislation would require election-related legal challenges to be filed only in the Hartford or Bridgeport Superior Courts instead of anywhere in the state. This change aims to reduce strain on election officials and the Attorney General's office, who currently must handle cases across multiple courts at the same time, especially during busy election periods. Centralizing cases would improve efficiency, reduce travel and scheduling conflicts, and allow a smaller group of judges to build expertise in election law. It would also promote faster, more consistent rulings in time-sensitive cases. The proposal argues that limiting venue to two locations would not significantly reduce access to the courts but would enhance predictability and stability in election administration.

#### **Ryan Burns, Executive Director and General Counsel, State Elections Enforcement Commission**

The bill would require certain election-related cases to be filed only in the Hartford or Bridgeport Superior Courts. The SEEC strongly supports this bill as this would improve

handling of complex election law by allowing judges in these courts to develop specialized expertise. It would also promote more consistent legal rulings, which is important for investigations and coordination with law enforcement. Additionally, centralizing cases would help agencies like the SEEC act quickly in urgent situations—such as obtaining court orders on election day—by working with familiar, nearby courts experienced in election matters.

### **State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, External Affairs**

The Judicial Branch does not have a concern with the substance of the bill but would like to see an addition that provides for the complainant to file a certification indicating that the complaint has been sent for delivered to the SEEC. This is already current law and should be added in Sections 1 and 3 that conforms with existing law. This is helpful to the court because it ensures that all parties involved, particularly the SEEC, have been properly notified about the complaint.

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

None Expressed

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

#### **Dr. Linda Dalessio**

She believes that election fraud is federal and belongs in federal court as elections are governed by federal law.

#### **Michele May**

Ms. May argues that while HB 5344's plan to centralize election cases in Hartford or Bridgeport may improve efficiency, it is insufficient without stronger safeguards against election fraud. It raises concerns about potential non-citizen voting and warns that concentrating cases in Hartford could lead to politicized decisions. The author recommends amendments including requiring real-time voter eligibility verification, mandating annual court reports on election-related fraud (including non-citizen involvement), and fast-tracking cases involving alleged fraud or voter suppression. Overall, her position is that the bill should focus more on protecting election integrity, not just improving court procedures.

#### **Jennifer Sparks**

She opposes this bill.

**Reported by: Cindy Panioto**

**Date: 3/24/26**