Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut

FACT SHEET
2019 Legislative Session

HOUSE BILL 7160
AN ACT INCREASING VOTER ACCESS

Summary of Proposal:

This proposal improves election administration in Connecticut by leveraging new technologies to reduce costs and inconveniences, especially those associated with voter registration and special elections; providing registrars with options to make election-day registration more convenient for voters; enfranchising election-day registrants in line to register before the polls close; creating opportunities for students to engage in election administration; and making Election Day a state holiday. It also provides equitable representation for communities whose residents are overrepresented among the incarcerated population.

Reason for Proposal:

A modern election system should couple common sense and 21st-century technology to help eligible residents register, vote, and participate in our democracy and prevent the delays that have plagued recent Connecticut elections.

Section Detail:

Sec. 1 provides students with the opportunity to receive academic credit at public high schools, colleges, and universities for volunteer work with local election officials.

Sec. 2 establishes Election Day as a state holiday, and combines the celebration of President Lincoln's birthday with President Washington's birthday, renaming it Presidents' Day.

Secs. 3-4 expand access to election-day registration by allowing individuals to vote provided they were in line to register by 8:00 p.m. and allowing registrars, with the permission of the Secretary of the State, to establish more than one election-day registration location.

Secs. 5-8 provide for electronic delivery of writs of special election and allow special elections to take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

Sec. 9 streamlines the electronic voter registration process and licensing transactions by eliminating duplicative attestations of voter eligibility when eligibility factors have already been verified.

Sec. 10 conforms the law to current practice by allowing electronic transmission of change of address information from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to registrars. It also eliminates duplicative mailings and paperwork when voters change their address through the DMV.

Sec. 11 allows for the Secretary of the State to accept electronic signatures for online voter registration and for any other forms or applications related to voter registration and election administration, except for those under the purview of the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

Secs. 12-14 allow use of technology to provide electronic forms and applications for voter registration at state agencies and other entities already required by statute to provide voter registration opportunities.

Sec. 15 counts incarcerated people in their home communities for purposes of redistricting after each decennial census.