



State & Commerce Committee - Board of Representatives

Lindsey Miller, Chair

Robert Roqueta, Vice Chair

Committee Report

Date: Thursday, December 17, 2020
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Place: This meeting was held remotely.

The State & Commerce Committee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Miller, Vice Chair Roqueta and Committee Member Reps. Adams, Graziosi and Policar. Also present were President Quinones; Reps. Cottrell, Curtis, de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Fedeli, Jacobson, Matherne, McMullen, Michelson, Sherwood, and Stella; Lyda Ruijter, Town Clerk; Chanta Graham, Assistant Town Clerk; Michael Pollard, Chief of Staff; Lucy Corelli, Registrar of Voters; and David Michel, Dan Fox, Patricia Billie Miller and Matt Blumenthal, State Legislators.

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Item No.	Description	Committee Action
1. SC30.035	REVIEW; 2020 November Election - What Went Well, What Should be Improved, and Lessons for the Future. 11/04/20 – Submitted by Rep. Cottrell 11/10/20 – Held at Steering	Report Made

Committee Members discussed Item No. 1 with Ms. Ruijter and Ms. Corelli. Items discussed included the following:

- The Town Clerk received 27,000 absentee ballot applications and 24,000 were returned
- For the most part, the process went smoothly, in part because they started preparations early and reached out to the Town Clerks Association
- The biggest challenges were the gap between the state and the city and lack of preparation for a city with multiple districts
- One challenge was tracking individuals who moved after receiving ballots
- A statewide call center would be helpful in the future
- The voting machines jammed from hand sanitizer, but that was resolved once it was discovered
- Curbside voting was available
- The Town Clerk used volunteers; the Registrar's office has always used seasonal workers who are trained; deputy Registrars are part of the MAA
- There was no provision made for emergency ballots for people in quarantine by the Town Clerk's office

- Three teams forgot to bring ballots to the tabulator. The campaigns were notified, the ballots were located and ultimately counted. This was human error
- The Registrar of Voters office does canvassing for voter registration and removes people for whom death certificates have been issued. Under state law they can't remove people without notification

2. SC30.038 REVIEW; City Legislative Priorities for Upcoming Session. **Report Made**
11/09/20 – Submitted by Michael Pollard

Committee members discussed Item 2 with Mr. Pollard. Items discussed included the following:

- The administration has met with city employees, state representatives, members of the COG and is working with the Norwalk, New Haven, and CCM on this year's legislative agenda
- Priorities for this year include: school facilities; needs based education funding; post-COVID economic recovery; housing segregation issues; and the police reform bill
- Notice requirements previously addressed by the city are now being pursued by another city
- The Eversource resolution passed by the Board should be included in the package
- Mental health support administered by the state down to municipalities should be addressed
- Economic relief should be a higher priority, including workforce development and technology training

The reduction in CARES Act funding was discussed with Mr. Pollard and the state representatives. The formula used is based upon population density, total population, and the grand list, which hurts Stamford. State representatives will continue to pursue this with OPM.

Committee members discussed the efficacy of sense of the Board resolutions to the State. It was suggested that representatives coordinate with the state representatives to see what is needed.

3. [SC30.036](#) RESOLUTION; Encouraging State to Automatically Provide Absentee Ballots to First Responders in all Elections. **Approved 3-0-2**
12/08/20 – Submitted by Reps. Stella, Pratt, and Curtis

Rep. Stella explained that he introduced this resolution because first responders often learn that they need to work at the last minute and are unable to vote. There was extensive discussion as to whether this should be limited to first responders or be extended to all voters and whether this was creating a preferred class of voters. There is no data reflecting that first responders have greater needs than other workers, but Rep. Stella stated that when he was a first responder he often missed the opportunity to vote.

A motion to approve Item No. 3 was made, seconded, and approved by a vote of 3-0-2 (Reps. Miller, Roqueta and Adams in favor; Reps. Graziosi and Policar abstaining).

Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Miller, Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).