



TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT OF**
SB 1226 AAC STATE VOTING RIGHTS IN RECOGNITION OF JOHN R. LEWIS
March 19, 2023

To: Honored Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, Vice Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Morrin Bello, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

From: Julianna Larue, Climate Policy & Outreach Coordinator, CTLeague of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV, thank you for the opportunity to comment **in support of SB 1226**. This legislation is a unique opportunity to provide new protections for the right to vote for all voters, especially communities of color..

Connecticut needs our own state-level Voting Rights Act because federal courts have weakened the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. As you know the Voting Rights Act was enacted to combat a wide range of barriers that exclude voters of color from the political process. A Connecticut Voting Rights Act will make voting more accessible to all Connecticut residents.

The right to vote is precious, and we must make our democracy stronger by protecting and strengthening access to the ballot box. All Connecticut voters should have fair and equal access to the ballot box, and that's especially important in a state like Connecticut with a history of creating obstacles for Black and Puerto Rican voters from voting. While some people might think of the federal Voting Rights Act as being directed at states in the South, its protections apply to all 50 states, including Connecticut. If passed, the CTVRA will become one of the most comprehensive state voting rights acts in the nation. It is time for Connecticut to be a leader in democracy reform.

CTLCV urges you to support SB 1226. It will expand protections from voter intimidation, prohibit voter deception and obstruction, and allow people who experience voter intimidation or obstruction to take action in civil court or to the SEEC (the State Elections Enforcement Commission). Passage of this bill will benefit our entire state and is a strong start towards fixing our broken Democracy. Thank you.

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