

Dear Governor Lamont:

April 6, 2026

The undersigned organizations-urge you to work with the Appropriations Committee Co-Chairs and House and Senate leadership to maintain the funding added by the Appropriations Committee to Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas's FY27 budget. **These additional resources are essential to educating the public, supporting our municipalities, and protecting the integrity of our democracy.**

It is critical that Connecticut residents understand all of the options available to them when they cast their ballots.

At the same time, the national voting rights landscape is shifting in ways that raise serious concerns. Federal actions and court decisions over the past decade have weakened key voter protections, and major changes to the administration of elections may be forthcoming. In this environment, Connecticut cannot afford to stand still.

This is not the moment to reduce funding for the Secretary of the State's office—particularly since Connecticut voters have recently approved significant expansions in voting access, including early in-person voting and no-excuse absentee voting. These widely supported reforms will only succeed if they are paired with a robust public education campaign and sufficient municipal capacity.

We respectfully urge you to work with legislative leaders to ensure inclusion in the FY27 budget of the following:

- \$2.25 million in municipal aid
- \$1 million for a statewide public education campaign
- \$400,000 for risk-limiting audits
- \$385,000 for the Municipal Election Advisory Board

The Need for Public Education is Urgent

- A comprehensive, statewide voter education campaign is our highest priority. Voter confusion already exists - and without action, it will grow.
- Many voters remain unaware that early voting is available. Even fewer understand that no-excuse absentee voting is being implemented. Without clear and consistent outreach, eligible voters will not take advantage of these new and expanded options.
- Today's information environment requires proactive communication. The era when newspaper articles could effectively inform the public has passed. A fragmented media landscape—combined with the rapid spread of misinformation—demands that government deliver accurate, accessible information across multiple platforms and communities.

- In addition, increased reliance on absentee voting requires clear guidance. Voters must understand deadlines, mailing timelines, and secure alternatives such as drop boxes. In the absence of this information, ballots risk arriving too late to be counted.

Municipal Capacity is Strained

Local election officials are responsible for implementing these significant changes, yet they remain under-resourced. Municipalities received only \$2 million in FY26, while the requested amount for FY27 is \$5 million. This gap jeopardizes the ability of towns to adequately staff, train, equip, and manage expanded voting operations.

A Changing National Environment

Across the country, legal and legislative developments are making voting more complex and, in some cases, more restrictive. Pending federal actions and recent court decisions underscore the uncertainty that voters face. Connecticut must ensure that its residents clearly understand their rights, responsibilities, and registration and voting deadlines.

Connecticut has taken hugely important steps to expand access to the ballot. However, access without education, and reform without implementation support, will not result in meaningful progress.

As the state moves forward with major election changes, the investments proposed by the Appropriations Committee are essential to making these reforms work as intended. We respectfully and urgently ask that you use the budget adjustment process to fully fund these critical components of our election system. The integrity, accessibility, and public confidence in Connecticut's elections depend on it.

Sincerely,

ACLU Connecticut
100% Democracy

Common Cause in CT
Responsive Gov Action

CT Citizen Action Group
League of Women Voters CT

CC: Senate President Looney
Senate Majority Leader Duff
Appropriations Committee Co-Chairs Osten and Walker

Speaker of the House Ritter
House Majority Leader Rojas