

From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Larry Perosino 860/509-6259

**NO NEED FOR POLICE PRESENCE AT POLLS ON ELECTION DAY
Voter intimidation will be prosecuted**

Connecticut Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz said today there is no evidence of a need for uniformed law enforcement personnel at Connecticut polling places on Election Day tomorrow.

Recent requests to local election officials to consider asking for such a presence borders on voter intimidation, Bysiewicz said.

"This isn't the 1960s or a fledgling democracy," said Bysiewicz. "I have seen no reason for anyone to conclude that a law enforcement presence at the polls is needed or justified."

Bysiewicz was joined at a State Capitol press conference this afternoon by Senator Christopher Dodd, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Elections Enforcement Commission Executive Director Jeffrey Garfield, Connecticut NAACP President Jimmy Griffin, the League of Women Voters, Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the African American Affairs Commission to assure voters that intimidation will be prosecuted and polling places must be accessible to all registered voters.

"I don't know what the motivations are, but we cannot afford to let anything or anyone intimidate us in such an important election," said Griffin. "The NAACP urges the African American voters of Connecticut, not to be discouraged by any measures encountered at the polling places and to cast their ballots, like never before."

A Voters Bill of Rights passed by the Legislature this year guarantees among other things that voters have the right to "Vote free from coercion or intimidation by election officials or any other person."

"A police presence at the polls is justified only by solid evidence of anticipated physical disorder or disruption, which certainly has not been shown so far, and only if both registrars request this highly exceptional remedy. There is no reason for special oversight in this election, based on past experience or present knowledge," said Blumenthal. "Nor is there any reason to doubt that our very capable officials will conduct this election in an honest, fair, and impartial manner. Any credible report of intimidation will be addressed swiftly by federal and state law and elections enforcement officials."

"The right to vote is constitutionally protected. All Connecticut citizens who have properly registered to vote are entitled to vote tomorrow," Garfield said. "Local election officials in each of our 169 towns have been busily preparing for tomorrow's important election, and we expect all applicable laws and procedures to be followed. Connecticut elections have historically been orderly, and we anticipate the same tomorrow."