

MAYOR
CAROLINE SIMMONS



CITY OF STAMFORD
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
888 WASHINGTON BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 10152
STAMFORD, CT 06904 - 2152
Tel: (203) 977-4081
Fax: (203) 977-5560

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AFFAIRS
AND CORPORATION COUNSEL
KATHRYN EMMETT**

DEPUTY CORPORATION COUNSEL
VIKKI COOPER

ASSISTANT CORPORATION COUNSEL
CYNTHIA C. ANGER
BARBARA L. COUGHLAN
CHRIS DELLASELVA
DANA B. LEE
AMY LIVOLSI
BURT ROSENBERG
MICHAEL S. TOMA

TO: Megan Cottrell, Clerk, Board of Representatives

FROM: Michael S. Toma, Esq., Assistant Corporation Counsel *MST*

DATE: December 14, 2021

RE: Charter Revision Commission Membership

You have asked whether state law requires that members of the Charter Revision Commission be registered voters.

The charter revision process is found in Chapter 99 of the Connecticut statutes. The first statute in this chapter, 7-187, is titled "Definitions," but it does not contain a definition of "elector." The next statute, 7-188, concerns the process for initiating the revision of an existing charter. One of the ways to do so is by petition "signed by not less than ten per cent of the electors of the municipality, as determined by its last-completed registry list." This statute further provides that the town clerk "shall proceed forthwith to determine [the petition's] sufficiency by comparing the signatures thereon with those contained in said registry list and shall certify its sufficiency or insufficiency to the appointing authority."

The registry list is a list of people who have registered to vote. There is a strong presumption that the legislature intended that the meaning of a term in one part of a Chapter should be the meaning of the term elsewhere in the Chapter, in the absence of an express indication to the contrary. Therefore, in my opinion, the meaning of "elector" in 7-188 is also the meaning of "elector" in 7-190.

Section 7-190 provides, in pertinent part, that the appointing authority shall "appoint a commission consisting of not fewer than five nor more than fifteen electors." Section 7-190 therefore requires that members of the Charter Revision Commission be persons who have registered to vote in the municipality for which they are appointed.