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Committee to act like court in contested Stratford election

By **Emilie Munson** Updated 4:41 pm EST, Friday, January 11, 2019

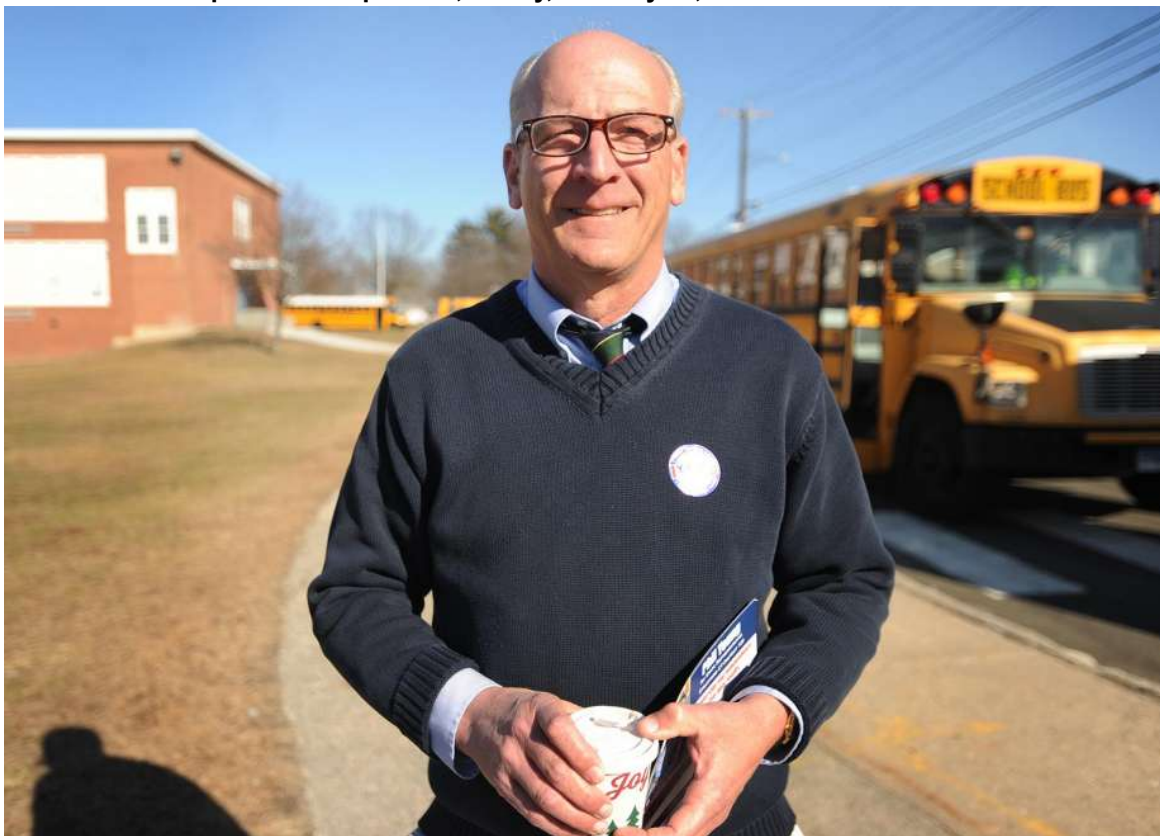


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State Rep. Phil Young of Stratford's apparent 13-vote victory will be examined by a bipartisan group of House lawmakers, who could agree to schedule another election.

A committee on the contested election for the state House seat representing Stratford's 120th District will handle the issue like a court case, lawmakers agreed on Friday.

During a 20-minute meeting of the House Committee on Contested Elections, its first since a similar case in 1985, members said they would ask

for the submission of evidence and seek testimony from witnesses.

RECOMMENDED VIDEO

While state Rep. Phil Young was narrowly elected in November and took the oath of office Wednesday, the results could be upended and could result.

to do today and going forward," the committee's four members. anybody — not just the voters in

ce and a list of witnesses by the opportunity to give witnesses, and at some point to will be able to give closing findings and

mplaint from the Feehan Agostino, D-Hamden, during

the meeting in the State Capitol complex. The two other members of the commission are Rep. Jason Perillo, R-Shelton, and Rep. Gregory Haddad, D-Storrs.

The committee has until Feb. 4 to decide whether a new election should be held.

On Election Day, there was an apparent mix-up at the Bunnell High School polling place, which served voters from two adjacent House districts. The issue was contested in Superior Court, then moved to the state Supreme Court, which said it was a matter for the state House of Representatives to decide.

D'Agostino said Friday that despite the two previous court proceedings, the committee would provide Young's and Feehan's campaigns their first opportunity to present their own evidence about the election, in a hearing.

The four committee members emphasized in opening remarks Friday that their work should be careful to avoid the perception of partisanship, and that they should be mindful of the precedent their work may set. However, in a straight vote on the issue, House Democrats, with a 92-59 majority, could easily push through Young's victory.

D'Agostino said a new election should not be ordered lightly, because it is impossible to recreate the circumstances of a previous election, like campaign momentum or voters' motivation. Quoting from a 1999 Connecticut Supreme Court case, he argued that a new election is always a different election.

"An election is essentially and necessarily a snapshot," D'Agostino said. "The snapshot can never be duplicated."

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