

**Testimony submitted to the Government Administration & Elections Committee Public Hearing**

**February 22, 2021**

**By Lynn Alvey Dawson, resident of Cheshire, Ct**

Honorable members of the GAE Committee, please accept this testimony in support of **House Resolution No 58 (HJ 58)** Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting and in support of **House Joint Resolution No 59 (HJ 59)** Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting.

I have been a resident of Cheshire, Connecticut since 1996. I am a regular voter and active participant in local, state and national campaigns. In 2019 I ran for elected office and expect to do so again in the future.

I believe that the right to vote is fundamental. I further believe that any method that expands this right in order to allow the participation by more citizens, is necessary. Today, we have so many residents of Connecticut working long hours, multiple jobs, balancing child care and work, caring for elderly parents as well as young families, employed in fields that require travel, and juggling the responsibilities of both work and school. All of these scenarios create obstacles to voting. Obstacles to voting create disenfranchisement.

This Country was founded on the principal of government by the people. We need to ensure this principal by removing obstacles to voting. Requiring every citizen to travel to a designated location to cast their ballot between designated hours on a Tuesday – is an antiquated notion. This rule no longer serves a population that is already being stretched to their limits.

Prior to 2020, five American states conducted their elections using a vote-by-mail system. In 2020, many states, including Connecticut expanded their voting system to allow no excuse absentee ballots. There is no evidence of widespread fraud as a result of these expanded systems.

Allowing early voting and no-excuse absentee voting will encourage participation in our elections. It removes obstacles to voting and limits disenfranchisement of citizens.

I encourage the members of the GAE Committee and all of our State Representatives and leaders to pass these two important resolutions.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lynn Alvey Dawson

20 Atwater Place

Cheshire, CT 06410