

My name is Michelle Beauregard. I am currently a preschool teacher in Hartford; however, for 11 years I was a family child care provider in Southington, where I live with my family and vote in the 16th state senate district.

I wanted to testify in support of allowing Connecticut voters to vote by mail. As a family child care provider, I worked alone from 6am to 6pm Monday through Friday. I would care for 6 children under the age of 5, 2 of those between 6 weeks and 24 months. Voting was always a hassle for me, as I am sure it is for other FCC providers.

I would pack up all 6 children, along with my own school age children who were home for the day (since there is no school) and drive to the polling location. That is 6 children into car seats. When we got to the polling place I would have to get the double stroller from the trunk and put on the infant carrier (like a backpack, but worn in the front to carry an infant). I would then get the 6 children out of their car seats, wearing the smallest child, the next two smallest in the stroller, and then 3 walking. My own children (I have 3) would walk along side as well.

The process of taking this many children into and out of the car takes about 10-15 minutes EACH TIME, depending on how cooperative the children are in getting in and out of their seats.

Once we were out of the car, we were able to go into the polling location, and then go through the process of voting. It is impossible to fit an adult and 9 children in the polling booth, but we all squished, since that was the process, or we were able to go to a privacy booth, if one was available.

I would often familiarize myself with the voting ticket in advance, as I knew I would not be able to spend a lot of time looking it over while there. I would then complete the voting process, while also explaining the older children what I was doing, and how voting is so important.

After the voting was completed, we would all get stickers (the highlight of their visit) and then get back into the car, another 10-15 minute process. We would drive the 2 minutes home and repeat the 10-15 minutes to get out of the vehicle.

Altogether, this is an hour long trip, where if I were alone it would be 5 minutes, and if I were able to mail in my vote it would be even less.

Voting is an integral part of our society, and one in which I value my contribution. If I did not, I would not have bothered to vote at all, as it was an arduous process. I hope you will consider allowing voters to vote via mail. It is a safe and efficient process, which can encourage more voters and the government would then have a better idea of the will of all the people.

Thank you
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