



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

HJ 58 RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

HJ 59 RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING.

February 18, 2021

To: Honored Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Members of the GAE Committee

From: Lori Brown, Executive Director, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on critical voting rights legislation. As an environmental organization dedicated to empowering voters on behalf of the environment, we know that more people voting will more accurately reflect the public's concerns about air and water quality, natural resource protection and climate change impacts.

Democracy, equity, and the environment are intertwined.

The public expects a clean, healthy and safe environment no matter where they live. The easier it is for people to vote, the more people will be engaged in our democratic process, which can only strengthen support for the environment.

For a lot of young people today—citizens from all ethnic and social backgrounds and income levels—climate change and environmental justice are key concerns that motivate them to get involved and to vote in federal, state, and local elections. Connecticut should be encouraging and helping these new voters by expanding all available options to cast their vote. Voter suppression should have no place in our state.

Accessibility is key to democracy.

CTLCV's work depends on voter engagement. Our support for pro-environment candidates includes removing any unnecessary obstacles to voting for them at election time. Everyone should have a say in what is happening to our planet and voting can be the most direct way to ensure the public's voice is heard from all segments of society.

The environment has become a key voting issue. In all our discussion with people running for elected office, we have seen that both candidates and voters have become increasingly more knowledgeable about environmental concerns, especially climate change. This was made more evident when our new President was elected on the most ambitious climate change platform in US history. Who we elect directly affects our environment.

The legislation before you to allow **No Excuse Absentee Voting** and **Early Voting** is long overdue and the public demands action. These two bills must not be derailed by the same voices that deny our climate is in crisis, or that our state's bedrock environmental laws should be weakened.

In addition to making it easier to vote, strengthening our democracy requires that winning candidates better reflect the will of the people. We urge the committee to take up HB 5884 which simply calls for a study of **Ranked Choice Voting**, a tested solution to ensure that the successful candidate will have majority support of the electorate.

Please use this opportunity to vote for legislation that will help Democracy, equity, and the environment.

Thank you for considering these comments as you deliberate voting rights legislation.

Lori Brown, Executive Director
CTLCV
553 Farmington Avenue, Suite 201
Hartford, CT 06105
ctlcv.org | ctlcv@ctlcv.org