



Government Administration and Elections Committee

Monday, February 22

Testimony in Support of

House Joint Resolution No. 58 (HJ 58): Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting

House Joint Resolution No. 59 (HJ 59) Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Maureen Chalmers, and I am President of the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges (4Cs), which represents 3,500 members at the twelve community colleges and 500 adjunct members at the University of Hartford. I offer the following testimony today in support of House Joint Resolution 58: Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting and House Joint Resolution 59: Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting.

I want to thank Connecticut legislators, the Secretary of the State, and the Governor for making voting safer and more accessible in the 2020 elections. Because of your bipartisan support for commonsense voting reform during a pandemic, more than 650,000 absentee ballots were securely cast in Connecticut yielding a record-breaking voter participation rate of almost 80%! What a wonderful affirmation of democracy. It is something for us all to be proud of.

Now it is time for you to make those changes permanent. By amending the State Constitution to permit early and No-Excuse absentee voting, you will be ensuring that all eligible and registered voters will have a greater opportunity to participate in our democracy. We know this is true, because we've seen the results. This is especially important for so many of our Community College students, many of whom work multiple jobs and rely on public transportation, while trying to balance their studies with family obligations.

And in addition to increasing voter access, by passing these resolutions you will also be respecting the will of Connecticut residents. 70% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats and 80% of unaffiliated voters in our state support early voting. And 73% of all voters in Connecticut support giving all voters the option to vote absentee without an excuse. The choice is clear. I am hoping this year, like last year, legislators on both sides of the aisle will come together to support democracy in Connecticut.

Thank you for accepting my testimony.

Maureen Chalmers
President
The 4Cs, SEIU Local 1973