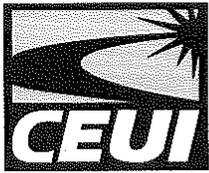


SEIU Local 511



CONNECTICUT EMPLOYEES UNION INDEPENDENT

PO Box 1268
Middletown, CT 06457

February 22, 2021

Government Administration and Elections

Testimony by Carl Chisem, President

Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511

In Support of H.J. 58 Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting

In Support of H.J. 59 Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, my name is Carl Chisem and I am President of the Connecticut Employees Union Independent, SEIU Local 511. We represent over 3,600 blue collar maintenance and service State workers. Our members provide valuable services within our state facilities. They cook, clean, repair, maintain and deliver in Connecticut's State buildings, hospitals, college campuses, airports, roads, bridges, and parks. I write in support of H.J. 58 and H.J. 59.

H.J. 58 Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No Excuse Absentee Voting. CEUI, SEIU Local 511 stands in strong support of H.J. 58. Providing registered voters with the freedom to choose whether to vote in person or by absentee ballot without a pre-defined "excuse" will only strengthen our democracy. Allowing voters to vote by absentee ballot in the 2020 General Election resulted in a record breaking 80% voter turnout. More than 650,000 voters cast their votes securely using absentee ballots providing many with the opportunity to participate in our democratic process.

With 73% of Connecticut voters supporting no excuse absentee voting, now is the time to pass this important resolution. We should allow the residents of Connecticut to have the final say regarding no excuse absentee voting. I urge the committee to approve this resolution.

H.J. 59 Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting. CEUI, SEIU Local 511 stands in strong support of H.J. 59 which would begin the process toward amending the State Constitution to allow for early voting. Currently, 42 states offer in person early voting options. Due to the pandemic, Connecticut voters were permitted to vote by absentee ballot in the 2020 CT Primary and General Election allowing for our highest voter turnout to date. Doing so educated voters as to the positive results of voting early which included shorter lines on Election Day and fewer barriers for voters to engage in, what is supposed to be, a democratic process.

We should continue our obligation to fight any suppression of voting. I urge the committee to support this resolution.

Thank you.

SEIU Local 511, AFL-CIO, CLC

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