

February 18, 2021

To: Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Mae Flexer and House Representative Daniel J. Fox and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

SUBJECT MATTER: Government Administration and Elections Bills.

H.J. No. 58 (COMM) RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT
TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

H.J. No. 59 (COMM) RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE
CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING.

S.B. No. 901 (RAISED) AN ACT EXTENDING TO JUNE 30, 2021, CHANGES IMPLEMENTED
FOR THE 2020 STATE ELECTION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19.

H.B. No. 6464 (RAISED) AN ACT EXTENDING TO MAY 31, 2021, SEVERAL CHANGES
IMPLEMENTED FOR THE 2020 STATE ELECTION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19.

I am in favor and fully support the four (4) proposed bills listed above which address and call for expanding absentee/mail-in voting and early voting reforms. Voting is a right and should be made more accessible to all eligible voters. Early voting removes the restrictiveness of voting on a weekday when most people work and/or have family and other responsibilities, have disabilities, health or other issues or challenges. Eligible voters of all varying demographics should be accommodated. Easier access is safer and avoids long lines and extensive waiting times. Lessening the restriction requiring an excuse for voting by absentee/mail-in makes voting more accessible. Allowing the counting of absentee/mail-in ballots prior to Election Day only strengthens and ensures voters ballots are properly checked and counted. Reforming voting regulations supports and strengthens our free and fair elections, where every legitimate vote should be counted.

Voting by absentee/mail-in ballots has a long track record in the U.S., with plenty of factual based evidence to dispel voter fraud. There is plenty of past and on-going evidence of success from prior elections in many states that utilize no-excuse mail-in voting and early voting. Thirty-eight (38) states and Washington D.C. allow for in-person early voting in some form. Surprisingly Connecticut is included on the list of only seven (7) states that do not allow early voting.

Twenty-nine (29) states and Washington D.C. allows absentee/mail-in ballot without providing an excuse. And five (5) states, Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington, all have been successfully conducting elections entirely by mail by not requiring an excuse.

Connecticut state and local officials go to great lengths to ensure elections are secure and legitimate, and ensure absentee/mail-in ballots are properly validated. Proven again in the recent November 2020 election which included the use of absentee mail-in ballot voting allowing the COVID-19 excuse.

It is time to bring Connecticut into the 21st century and be a leader in protecting and enhancing our voter rights and accessibility.

Respectfully Submitted,

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