



TESTIMONY OF ERIN O. CROSBY, DIRECTOR OF WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND RACIAL JUSTICE
OF YWCA GREENWICH, ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF YWCA GREENWICH

TO THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JOINT COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

March 10, 2021

Senator Flexer (Co-Chair), Representative Fox (Co-Chair), distinguished members of Joint Committee on Government Administration and Elections of the Connecticut General Assembly:

Thank you for your consideration of HJ 58 and HJ 59, both intended to modernize our democracy in the State of Connecticut. My name is Erin O. Crosby, Director of Women’s Empowerment and Racial Justice for the YWCA Greenwich, and I live in Norwalk, Connecticut. Passing both **HJ 58**, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to **Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting**; and **HJ 59**, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to **Permit Early Voting** are extremely important to me and YWCA Greenwich because it removes barriers to voting. Each bill increases the likelihood that young people, People of Color, those living in poverty, and those without transportation have the opportunity to cast their vote. Voting is a hallmark of our democracy, and full participation in the voting process moves us closer to fulfilling the promises of this country.

Forty-three (43) states offer in-person early voting options, including 6 states with all-mail elections. Connecticut lags behind most of the nation. Many voters work 2 or 3 jobs just to keep their families afloat and need more options than just a single day to get time off for voting. Recent polling says nearly 80% of Connecticut voters support early voting.

More than 650,000 voters voted securely by absentee ballot in the 2020 CT General Election—which means they voted early on their own schedules. Connecticut's record-breaking 80% voter turnout in the 2020 General Election was thanks to absentee ballot voting. Furthermore, 73% of Connecticut voters support giving all voters the option to vote by absentee ballot without needing an excuse.

While HJ 59 (Early Voting) only needs a 50% majority vote in favor, both the House and Senate must pass HJ 58 (No-Excuse Absentee Voting) with at least a 75% supermajority this legislative session—in which case this proposal would also appear before voters as a ballot question in the 2022 statewide election. This is something we can and should get done during this session.

The choice is clear. Please choose democracy and pass HJ 58 and HJ 59.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erin O. Crosby