

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
NANCY J. DINARDO
CHAIR
CONNECTICUT DEMOCRATIC STATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 22, 2021
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.**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and members of the GAE Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to express support for HJ 58 and HJ 59, which will allow for no excuse absentee voting and early voting, respectively. Both pieces of legislation are long overdue and I strongly encourage passage of both.

Connecticut, which is normally a policy trendsetter, is well behind the rest of the country when it comes to providing easy, safe and uninhibited access to voters to exercise their right to vote. Currently, 36 states allow for no excuse absentee voting or all mail-in voting and 45 states allow for early voting.

This past election cycle, the coronavirus pandemic heightened awareness for the need for both of these pieces of legislation as voters faced the potential of risking their health to vote. The state acted quickly in allowing for the use of absentee ballots to keep voters safe and the results were remarkable. The use of absentee ballots was high and the numbers were historic: 35% of ballots cast were by absentee ballot, 93% of absentee ballots issued were returned, and less than 1% of returned absentee ballots were rejected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary of the State Denise Merrill and her office for all the good work they did this past year to ensure the process was smooth, transparent and easy. I would also like to thank them for the work they did in 2019 to get this legislation passed. While it was not successful that year, I hope that our experience in the 2020 election proves its strong need to legislators and it sees a different fate in 2021. I urge passage.

Thank you.

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