

February 22, 2021

Government Administration and Elections Committee
Connecticut State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: SUPPORT for HJ 58 and HJ59

The members of the Democratic Town Committee of Sharon urge you to bring Connecticut into the modern era and in line with other states by supporting these measures to expand the opportunity to vote:

HJ58: A Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting;

HJ59: A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting.

Gov. Lamont wisely signed an executive order allowing for no-excuse absentee balloting to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus during last year's elections. The results were a resounding success for participatory democracy. More than 1.86 million Connecticut voters - nearly 80 percent of the state's registered voters - cast ballots in the Nov. 3 elections. More than 650,000 - nearly 35 percent - of those voted by absentee ballot.

Participation was even greater in our town of Sharon. A full 87 percent of registered voters cast a ballot last November, with 37 percent choosing the option to vote by absentee.

Connecticut proved that, like most other states, its dedicated state and local election officials can manage the process of no-excuse absentee balloting in a manner that keeps our elections secure while encouraging the widest possible participation. For our democracy to stay strong, all eligible voters need to be able to vote and to be able to count on their votes being counted. It no longer makes sense to limit eligible voters to one day between certain times that they must show up in person to cast a ballot. So many of us work more than one job and, with family, manage busy and complex schedules so that, even with the best intentions to vote, situations can arise that make getting down to Town Hall on Election Day impossible.

For these reasons, we strongly support constitutional amendments to allow both no-excuse absentee balloting and early voting. We also strongly urge that the state allocate the necessary financial resources to Town Clerks and Registrars to manage these expanded voting opportunities.

Increasing opportunities to vote benefits everyone in our state. Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy, an act that protects all our other rights. The more we can do to engage voters to participate in our elections, the stronger we will all be. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,
Jill Drew
Chair, Sharon Democratic Town Committee