

February 21, 2021

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Connecticut General Assembly

Re: Making Voting Convenient and Safe

To Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Janice Elliott and I am a resident of Hamden. **I write today to urge your support for two bills:**

**H.J. No. 58 (COMM)** Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting, and

**H.J. No. 59 (COMM)** Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow For Early Voting

My husband and I are seniors and voted absentee for the first time in the 2020 election as a precautionary measure to reduce potential exposure to Covid-19. Once we learned about the absentee voting process, we found it to be straightforward and highly convenient – our registrations were checked as part of the process, the requested ballots arrived in good time, and we were able to drop our completed ballots in the box outside Hamden Town Hall prior to the election so we didn't have to rely on the post office at a time when the postal service was expecting delivery delays.

I wondered at the time: why did it have to take a pandemic for Connecticut to put in place a process that allowed *any* registered Connecticut voter to vote by absentee ballot and to cast that ballot well in advance of Election Day? Any why would Connecticut want to return to its overly restrictive system once the pandemic is behind us – especially since the elections proved to be safe, secure and had the highest turnout ever (nearly 80%), and since two-thirds of states already allow no excuse absentee voting?

Connecticut legislators should let the *voters* decide if we want to make “one person one vote” more convenient for all eligible voters. Passing these constitutional amendments would make that possible on a more permanent basis. Both Resolutions are pro-voter and reflect the on-going concerns we face as voters: pandemics, extreme weather events, shifting work or school schedules, incapacity, confusing messages about voting rights and responsibilities, or other unforeseen hurdles that may arise at election time.

**Please vote for these bills to be sent to the House and Senate for their full consideration and passage.** Thank you for all you do to protect our right to vote and to make voting convenient and safe.

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