

To Members of the GAE:

As a citizen and a member of the Board of Common Cause in Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony in favor of HJ No. 58 and HJ 59. I strongly favor the proposed Constitutional amendments to allow no-excuse absentee voting in Connecticut and urge the Committee to pass them; I thank the Committee for bringing them forward.

Even though Connecticut has not passed the voter suppression laws that other states continue to pass, our Constitution makes us one of the more restrictive states in which to vote. As you know, we are one of a tiny number of states that allow neither early voting nor no-excuse absentee voting. The suspension of the restriction on absentee ballots in 2020 was, in effect, a successful experiment that indicates that no-excuse absentee voting increases voter engagement while preserving the integrity of the ballot. And the public loves it: 73% favor lifting the restriction; 70% support secure drop boxes for their ballot. In other states, early voting is similarly successful and popular with the public.

All the academic research indicates that the harder we make it to vote, the lower the turnout. This state has a responsibility to its citizens to make voting as barrier-free as possible, while still protecting the integrity of the process. Amending the Constitution to make no-excuse absentee voting and early in-person voting permanently legal accomplishes both these things and is an essential step in furthering democracy in Connecticut.

Thank you for considering my views.

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