

My name is Kathy Flaherty and I'm a registered voter in Newington.

I wrote today in strong support of both resolutions. It is far past time to bring Connecticut voting into the modern era.

I have volunteered on national voter protection lines in past elections, answering calls from voters around the country. It's remarkable how other states conduct elections with early voting and make it far easier to obtain absentee ballots. That's in both red states and blue states - so this isn't (or shouldn't be) a partisan issue - it's about making it possible for more people to participate in a political process.

I voted via absentee ballot in both the primary and the general election and was grateful to be able to check the box available due to the Governor's executive orders during the global health pandemic. I know that I read the instructions very carefully, since I had never voted absentee before, and I wanted to make sure my ballot wouldn't be rejected. I was able to take a long, slow walk to the ballot box at town hall on my own schedule.

When I saw this story on NBC Connecticut after the primary during the summer, I was horrified - because the Newington polling place in the story is the school where I vote <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/covid-19-protocols-vary-between-polling-places/2317427/>. I am grateful that I didn't have to put my health at additional risk to participate in the primary.

I would encourage this committee to ensure that whatever changes get made to the election process in Connecticut, that the process is fully accessible to people with disabilities. I encourage you to reach out to Disability Rights Connecticut, who have expertise in the area of voting access for people with disabilities.

Kathy Flaherty
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