



Connecticut Chapter
P.O. Box 270595
West Hartford, Connecticut 06127
connecticut.sierraclub.org

Dear Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Haskell, Representative Thomas, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to testify on several issues before you today.

Sierra Club Connecticut supports a vibrant and robust democracy. When all people are able to easily vote and elect folks that represent their interests, the government functions for the people. When folks are left out of the election process and therefore not represented in government, their communities' needs may not be met. We advocate for the expansion of voting rights and absentee voting as a way to ensure that all people are represented in a just and equitable society.

House Joint Resolution 58- Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting

Sierra Club supports House Joint Resolution 58. Absentee ballots are a safe, cost effective, efficient and secure way to expand voting rights here in Connecticut. All registered voters should have the freedom to vote either in person or by absentee ballot without an "excuse." It both strengthens and protects our democracy.

Connecticut's record breaking 80% voter turnout in the 2020 General Election was thanks to absentee ballot voting. More than 650,000 Connecticut voters used absentee ballots.¹ It gave folks a great option to cast their vote without fear of risking their health and safety or taking time off from their jobs. This remarkable number is proof that given the option to vote in a way that feels safe and accessible, more people will participate in the election process.

Absentee ballots can be mailed in, dropped in a secure ballot drop box, or delivered in person to the Town Clerk's office. You are able to check to make sure your ballot has been received via the internet. Absentee ballot drop boxes are only accessed by staff authorized by the town clerk. These methods are safe and secure for both the voter and the process.

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<https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases/Poll-of-Connecticut-Voters-Shows-Broad>



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Polling data shows that 73% of Connecticut voters overwhelmingly support giving all voters the option to vote by absentee ballot without an excuse.² We urge you to pass this proposal to amend the state constitution so voters can approve it in the 2022 statewide election.

House Joint Resolution 59- Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting

Sierra Club supports House Joint Resolution 59. Early voting is an essential tool in both broadening our democracy and expanding access to voting rights here in Connecticut. Forty three other states offer in-person early voting options, including 6 states with all-mail in elections.³ Connecticut is lagging behind the rest of the nation. It is time for us to catch up.

Younger voters here in Connecticut are eager to participate in the election process but find it difficult to miss work or class time. Many voters work multiple jobs to keep their families afloat and need more than a single day option to go vote. Our representative democracy would be well served with voting that is simple and accessible to people regardless of any circumstances.

Nearly 70% of Republicans, 90% of Democrats, and 80% of unaffiliated voters in Connecticut support allowing early, in-person voting.⁴ The people want more options to vote than they currently have and want the opportunity to vote to amend the state Constitution to allow early voting. We urge you to approve this proposal so the voters can approve it in the 2022 statewide election.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues and consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Ann Gadwah
Sierra Club Connecticut

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<https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases/Poll-of-Connecticut-Voters-Shows-Broad>

³ <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/early-voting-in-state-elections.aspx>

⁴ <http://www.surveyusa.com/client/PollReport.aspx?g=ff2d7691-1aa7-4aa6-b0f4-0baf490bb16d>

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