

To: Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Mae Flexer and House Representative Daniel J. Fox and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

SUBJECT MATTER: Government Administration and Elections Bills

H.J. No. 58 (COMM) RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

H.J. No. 59 (COMM) RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING.

S.B. No. 901 (RAISED) AN ACT EXTENDING TO JUNE 30, 2021, CHANGES IMPLEMENTED FOR THE 2020 STATE ELECTION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19.

H.B. No. 6464 (RAISED) AN ACT EXTENDING TO MAY 31, 2021, SEVERAL CHANGES IMPLEMENTED FOR THE 2020 STATE ELECTION AS A RESULT OF COVID-19.

Voting reform in CT is long overdue. We are far behind a growing number of states who have made access to voting a priority for all. My daughter lives in one of the five states that successfully conduct elections entirely by mail (Oregon). Voters in that state do not need access to sophisticated technology, transportation, or flexible working conditions to be able to voice their preference for those who will represent them. Alternatively, more than half of U.S. states offer their residents flexibility in voting either through early voting or no excuse absentee ballots. With the plethora of unforeseeable reasons (i.e. a pandemic) for not attending polling stations in person, respect for the autonomy and dignity of our voters calls for us to reform and update our processes to allow all voices to be heard.

State and local officials across the country, including Connecticut, have gone to great lengths to ensure our elections are secure and legitimate. Instances of voter fraud are rare but possible in any system that we put in place. Even with the short time frame to institute the emergency measures for the 2020 election, we experienced a secure and legitimate election which included the use of widespread absentee ballot voting by mail and drop box using the Covid-19 excuse.

It is not just a good idea to update and revise our voting process; it is necessary. Limiting access to this fundamental exercise of democracy threatens the civil rights of those persons who, for whatever the reason, have both historically and recently had difficulty voting on the one day and at the specific place to which they are assigned.

I fully support all 4 proposed bills listed above.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauren Gister  
41 Railroad Avenue  
Chester, CT 06412  
860-304-7018