

## Written Testimony Supporting

- H.J. No. 58- Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting.
- H.J. No. 59- Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting.
- S.B. No. 901- An Act Extending to June 30, 2021, Changes Implemented for the 2020 State Election as a Result of COVID-19.
- H.B. No. 6464- An Act Extending to May 31, 2021, Several Changes Implemented for the 2020 State Election as a Result of COVID-19.

February 22, 2021

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Zachary Hayden, and I am a teacher and father of two children from Westbrook. As a teacher and parent I emphasize the inclusive nature of our state and our country, the opportunities for expression and healthy disagreement, the diverse conversations that compose the sounds of our communities. Nowhere should the sense of inclusion and full participation be more present than at the ballot box. Yet, Connecticut continues to have archaic voting rules that inhibit safe and timely voting for all eligible citizens. I voted by absentee ballot in 2020 because I wanted to reduce the #'s at the polling location. Many others made the same choice, yet lines were long in the cold at 6:30am on election day. The 2020 election proved that we can take steps towards safe and secure absentee ballot voting.

I teach in an independent school that does not get the day off on election day. My wife works as well. It has always been difficult to find the time to manage our jobs and commutes and our children to both be able to go and vote. And I live in a town where the line length and polling location are relatively manageable, pointing out again, the inequities present in this fundamental process.

Connecticut should not be behind most of the nation when it comes to voting laws. Voting is fundamental to our democracy, so improving opportunities for people to vote early and absentee makes our democracy stronger. It's time to take a step forward by supporting H.J. 48, H.J. 49, S.B. 901, and H.B. 6464 and begin to improve the inclusivity of one of our most important collective duties.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my support for these important resolutions,  
Zachary Hayden, Westbrook, CT