

February 21, 2021

Re: Testimony in support of HJ58 (NEAV) & HJ59 (EV) ballot resolutions

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

I am writing to request that you take favorable action on HJ58 and HJ59, the resolutions proposing constitutional amendments to allow no-excuse absentee and early voting in Connecticut.

Connecticut voters are disadvantaged in that we're one of only seven states that does not allow either early voting or no-excuse absentee voting. We should be making it easier, not more difficult, to vote. This problem is particularly acute in this time of pandemic.

The one-time no-excuse absentee voting adopted last year was wildly popular, with one-third of all ballots cast by absentee voting. Despite the logistical challenges, state and local election officials came through with flying colors. Expanded access to absentee voting led to record-breaking voter participation rates across the state. Polls show that both early voting and no-excuse absentee voting enjoy overwhelming public support from Connecticut voters, regardless of party affiliation.

But to strengthen our democracy we need to do more than make it easier to vote; we need to ensure that winning candidates better reflect the will of the majority. That's what Ranked Choice Voting offers, and it's why I'm also asking you to vote HB-5884, the Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Ranked Choice Voting, out of your committee.

The respected and non-partisan American Academy of Arts and Sciences recommended ranked choice voting in its report, *Reinventing Democracy for the 21st Century*. Leading conservative voices like Norm Ornstein and the late Senator John McCain have endorsed Ranked Choice Voting.

Thank you for considering these important voting and election reforms.

Sincerely,

Harald Hille
Riverside CT