

The League of Women Voters of Southeastern CT (LWVSECT) is a grassroots, non-partisan, political organization dedicated to empowering voters and defending democracy. One of our key 2021 priorities is “Protecting and Expanding Voters’ Rights and Access through Early In-Person Voting and No-Excuse Absentee Ballots.”

CT is one of only a handful of states that does not permit early in-person voting; it is also one of the states with the most restrictive absentee voting requirements. These restrictions reduce voting access for many potential voters including working parents, caregivers, long-distance commuters, sole proprietors, those working more than one job, and others. A recent survey (Jan 11-17, 2021 by Secure Democracy) indicates that 79% of CT registered voters support early in-person voting, and 70% support allowing all voters to request an absentee ballot (<http://www.surveyusa.com/client/PollReport.aspx?g=ab14c9bc-cfe0-4ef9-b3cb-8fdffb529f60>). The November 2020 election held during the pandemic demonstrated that eligible CT voters welcomed the opportunity to cast their ballot safely and securely by mail, with over 35% of eligible voters choosing to vote that way.

However, a key hurdle to implementing these 21st century voting options in CT is that the CT State Constitution (Article 39) currently limits the reasons for which eligible voters are able to request an absentee ballot, and limits in-person voting to election day. Thus, amendments to the state constitution are required for voting options to be expanded in our state!

The LWVSECT supports both **H.J. No. 58: Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting**, and **H.J. No. 59: Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting**.

These two constitutional amendments, as written, will allow the General Assembly to subsequently determine the best methods to implement early-voting and excuse-free mail-in voting in a safe and secure manner in CT, and also allow the General Assembly to revise those methods as

needed, as voting technology and security evolve, without being hampered by a cumbersome Constitutional Amendment process in the future.

The LWVSECT requests the GAE Committee please support these two constitutional amendment resolutions.

Democracy flourishes when all eligible voters are able to cast their ballot. Thank you in advance for supporting these two amendments that will give all eligible CT voters updated, 21st-century options to cast their ballots safely, securely and conveniently in a manner that best suits their needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hutchinson and Irene Weiss

League of Women Voters of Southeastern CT