

Government Administrations and Elections Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200
Hartford, CT 06106
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Dear Representatives,

As a former candidate for public office, I ask that you support efforts to expand access to absentee ballots and allow early voting online and by mail.

In 2019, I had over 8,000 conversations with voters in Wallingford. This was the product of knocking on doors almost every weekend between January 1 and November 5. I knew the discouraging fact that so few people would ultimately vote in the election. However, what was more discouraging was how fixable the problem was.

The story is not one of apathy, but rather access. Sure, if you're looking for the rare case of apathy to support that as your belief, that was out there, too, but what I encountered repeatedly was voters who said they intended to vote, but said it depended on whether their boss would allow them to come in late or leave early. For others it was whether they could find childcare for their children or an aging parent. For many, the hours of voting available to them overlapped with cooking breakfast or dinner for their family. And on and on.... All solvable by expanding the voting window.

Further heartbreaking was how connected these narratives were by the feeling that their vote would not matter. Note here that people were not saying they didn't want to vote, but rather that, whether or not they voted, they knew that many more like them would not be able to, and that the same people with access would carry the vote. Those with wealth, flexible jobs, and the retired controlled the privilege.

I can also tell you that our voting process on Election Day is broken. From having staged poll monitors, we saw an error rate of 1-2% on Election Day that resulted in the wrong names being crossed off. This wasn't fraud. It was poor training by the Registrar of Voters, substandard conditions in large and noisy gymnasiums and cafeterias, and exhausted workers who often had to ask for names to be repeated. Simply, the way elections are run is error prone and exhausting for everyone involved.

We have an opportunity to do better when our representatives are not dismissive of experiences that do not mirror their own. I pray you will listen.

Sincerely,

Jared Liu
Wallingford, CT