



Testimony in Support of HJ 59: A RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING and Support of HJ 58: A RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

**Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ
February 18, 2021**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ and I am writing today in support of HJ 59 and HJ 58.

I am writing on behalf of the 614 congregations and more than 120,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 1987 the assembled delegates and ministers of the historic Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ met and voted on a Resolution that called upon the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to affirm the responsibility of all Christians to vote and encourage church members, through education and other appropriate means to be responsible informed voters in all elections.

Absentee ballots are safe, cost effective, efficient and secure. Seventy-three percent of Connecticut voters support giving all voters the option to vote by absentee ballot without needing an excuse.

Forty-three states offer in person early voting options, including six states with all mail elections, making it unnecessary for them. Connecticut lags behind most of the nation. More than 650,000 voters voted by absentee ballot in the 2020 Connecticut General Election, which means they voted early, on their own schedules. Nearly 80% of Connecticut voters support early voting. Many voters work two or three jobs just to keep their families afloat and need more options than just a single day to get time off for voting.

All of God's children deserve an opportunity to vote absentee ballots and to vote early like most other states already encourage. Therefore, we support both of these Resolutions.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony.

Blessings,

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