



Dear members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

The leaders of New Haven Rising strongly support the passage of HJ 58, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting; and HJ 59, a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting. New Haven Rising members were active in getting out the vote during this past national election and Georgia runoffs. Seventy New Haven volunteers joined 1000 UNITE-HERE volunteers in Georgia. Together we knocked on nearly 1.6 million doors and had 13,000 conversations each day! Those we talked to at the doors were 13 percent more likely to vote; that is a total of 86,000 votes, which is larger than the Warnock and Ossoff victories. While Stacey Abrams sowed the ground in Georgia, we helped with the harvest and gained a tremendous victory!

Early voting effectively enfranchises voters who would not otherwise participate in elections. It is difficult for working people to vote on election day when they are balancing multiple jobs and dependent care. The lack of adequate public transportation is also a major impediment for voting. In Georgia voters would make plans with us to get a ride to vote, but then find themselves stuck on the other side of the city with a hours long commute on public transportation. Coordinating with these voters sometimes took more than one day, but their voices should count in an election. After all, it is precisely hardships that they face, which merit more attention from elected leaders and it is their effective disenfranchisement that often causes elected leaders to not address these hardships.

Research shows that these laws have the potential to transform electoral participation and even save lives. If a person votes, others in their household are more likely to vote, and the person is also more likely to vote in the future. Moreover, research also indicates that a law, which eased voting in Brazil, caused increased spending on healthcare for the poor and reduced infant mortality rates. In Connecticut, we are confronting decades of segregated development which have cut generations of people out of opportunity. Undoing this history will also save lives and restore hope to millions of our residents. Better voting laws are an important tool in changing the maps of segregated development that pervade Connecticut.

New Haven Rising knows firsthand how early voting and absentee voting were key to Democratic victories in Georgia and elsewhere in this past election cycle. However, perhaps more importantly, these expanded voting rights were key to the triumph of our democracy against authoritarian and anti-democratic forces that unfortunately exists in this country. Democracy thrives when people vote, the more the better. The voices of all Americans should be heard! Our laws should make voting as convenient as possible and not more difficult. Objections that such convenience will be abused and lead to fraudulent elections is not based on any valid evidence. We feel such objections are just a smoke screen for voter suppression.

New Haven Rising Key Leaders

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