

Good Morning,

I am submitting this written testimony as a Registrar of Voters in Sprague, CT. HJ-58 expands the absentee ballot application to "no fault". I support this expansion of the ability of voters to vote via absentee ballot. I would however like the law to include restrictions on who may assist with absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots. Candidates, parties, or people affiliated with (paid or volunteer) candidates should not be able to handle applications or ballots for anyone other than immediate family (which is defined in the law). Since the absentee ballot process is the only part of the election that does not require representatives from at least two (2) parties to be involved, I believe the absentee ballot function should be removed from the Town/Municipal Clerks and be given to the Registrars of Voters and a requirement that at least two (2) individuals from different parties be involved in the transmittal, opening, collection of said applications and ballots. Absentee Ballots should also be included in the random election audits that are completed. As of now, they are not part of the audit process.

Although early voting is carried out in most states in the US, CT does not have a county government system to assist with early voting. Most towns/cities use at least one school as a polling place. If early voting occurs, will it be at one location and not in each district? If so, then the ability of voters to get to a single location in a town during what most likely will be limited hours is hindered. If early voting takes place in each district, how will local governments pay for the additional hours, staff and how and where will registrars store marked ballots?

Currently the Connecticut Voter Registration System (CVRS) system fails during peak times. SOTS Merrill is working on updating this system and it is expected to launch in two to three years. Registrars and Clerks will require training and normally we do not encounter errors or issues until a major election. I greatly respect the

employees at the SOTS office, however, they do not have the staffing numbers necessary to operate a manned help-line during elections.

Unless HJ-59 has a legislative timeline for implementation, I cannot support an idea that is not practical for most towns and cities.

Thank You
Barbara Richardson Crouch
Registrar of Voters, Sprague