

Kathy Samodel, Clinton, CT 06413 - Testimony in Opposition to HJ No. 58
To: Members of the Government and Elections Administration Committee

Dear Chairman, Legislators, and members of the Government and Elections Administration Committee,

I ask you to vote **No on HJ No. 58**.

Our Constitution does not need to be amended to allow no excuse absentee voting. Earlier attempts to pass such a bill have failed for numerous good reasons. The number one concern in an election is not convenience, but integrity and reliability. Below are points related to this vital feature of any valid election.

1. Absentee ballots are not “secret ballots.”
2. Absentee ballots are still counted by the same privately owned voting machines that have been in the news, including Diebold, ES&S, Sequoia and all the rest.
3. In many cases, like King County, WA, the Post Office no longer controls the incoming mail, instead a private company sorts incoming absentee ballots into precincts before giving them back to county for counting. This breaks down any chain of custody rules that may have been in place, and privatizes another link in the chain.
4. From beginning to end, the whole system of Absentee Ballots is insecure, as ballots are no longer strictly controlled by the County and citizen poll workers in the individual Precincts.
5. Voter Suppression, Vote Buying, Vote Stuffing become far easier in this system.
6. Accidental double voting can and does happen.
7. Some studies show a short term spike, but long term decline in voter participation, in 100% absentee systems. Claims that Vote-By Mail will increase turnout have no real evidence supporting this assertion.
8. The post office loses mail or just misplaces it for years, the county loses ballots, and people lose their own ballots.
9. The Absentee System greatly alters the Precinct System.
10. Vote-By Mail systems vastly increase the time it takes to count elections.
11. Vote-By Mail systems eliminate “Election Day” and replace it with “Election Month,” thereby greatly increasing the costs campaigns must spend on GOTV (Get-Out the Vote) efforts.

I am looking for any support for the integrity of elections,

Thank you,

Kathy Samodel