

**RE: Testimony in support of HJ58 (NEAV) & HJ59 (EV)**

To Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, ranking members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco and distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

**I am writing in support of HJ58 and HJ59**, the resolutions proposing constitutional amendments to allow no-excuse absentee and early voting in Connecticut.

Connecticut is one of only seven states that does not allow early voting, no-excuse absentee voting or vote-by-mail, making it more difficult to vote here than in the vast majority of the nation. No-excuse absentee voting was incredibly popular last year, with one-third of all ballots cast absentee, in what has been deemed by federal officials as perhaps the most secure American election in history. As a poll worker myself — assigned to open and tally absentee ballots — I can personally attest to the remarkable success of absentee voting in 2020, particularly the ease for an aging population of being able to simply drop off their ballot in the boxes at our town hall. Expanded access to absentee voting led to record-breaking voter participation rates across the state, including here in Woodbury. Polls show that both early voting and no-excuse absentee voting enjoy overwhelming public support from voters of all affiliations in Connecticut.

The right to vote safely, securely and without intimidation, is one of the core principles of American democracy. It is not a privilege, it is a RIGHT. As such, our elected representatives have the solemn obligation to make the process of voting as easy and accessible as possible for ALL voters. That is why I am asking you to vote both resolutions favorably out of the GAE Committee.

But strengthening American democracy also requires that winning candidates better reflect the will of the majority. That's just common sense... and it is the benefit of Ranked Choice Voting, and why I urge you to raise **HB-5884, the Act Establishing a Task Force to Study Ranked Choice Voting**. A similar bill was voted out of your Committee in 2019, passed the House, and was raised again last year, demonstrating the widespread support that exists among voters and the General Assembly.

Thank you for considering these important voting and election reforms.

Sincerely,

Martha Sherman  
Woodbury, Connecticut