
Garrett Sullivan

23 Clark Avenue
East Haven, CT 06512
garrettsull@gmail.com

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

My name is Garrett Sullivan and I am a voter in East Haven. I strongly believe that the right to vote is the most fundamental right in a democracy, and therefore it should be *convenient* (yet secure and accurate) for individuals to have their voices heard. Please support the following commonsense, bipartisan measures in the 2021 legislative session, which will make Connecticut a national leader in voter access and voting rights:

1. A constitutional amendment to allow all registered voters to vote by absentee ballot without an “excuse” (*HJ58*).
2. A constitutional amendment to allow early, in-person voting (*HJ59*)
3. Establish a task force to study ranked-choice voting (*HB-5884*)
4. Legislation to implement automatic voter registration (*AVR*) beyond the Department of Motor Vehicles to other state agencies and to update the online voter registration (*OVR*) system.
5. Legislation to restore voting rights to individuals on parole.
6. Legislation to allow for absentee ballots to be counted early, and for secure ballot drop boxes.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, members of the legislature, Governor Lamont and Secretary Merrill jumped into action to safeguard voting rights and ensure that voting would be safe, secure and accessible during the pandemic. Thanks to their leadership and the temporary expansion of voter access, Connecticut was able to run one of its smoothest (and safest) elections in recent history, avoiding the weeks of uncertainty that other states experienced. As a result, local election officials, poll workers, and volunteers conducted an election with more votes cast than any election in the history of our state. This session, we have the chance to make these temporary reforms permanent, and I believe we can't let this opportunity pass us by.

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 majority of the nation. In the 2020 election cycle, no-excuse absentee voting was widely popular, with one-third of all ballots cast absentee, and no evidence of the widespread voter fraud that some were concerned about. Polls show that both early voting and no-excuse absentee voting enjoy overwhelming public support from Connecticut voters of all affiliations, and not just during times of pandemic. The people of Connecticut had a mandate in 2020; to reform our democracy through these legislative goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Garrett Sullivan