

Testimony in SUPPORT of:

- **HJ 58: Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting**
- **HJ 59: Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting**

Dear GAE Committee Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Fox, Vice Chairs Sen. Haskell and Rep. Thomas, and Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco and Members of the GAE Committee,

I am a founder and leader of Indivisible Greenwich, a grass roots organization that, for the past four years, has been heavily involved in voter contact in states around the country. As a result, I am familiar with many of the differences in voting laws among states. As states across the country have taken steps to make voting more convenient and to reduce the wait on lines on voting day by sending out written ballots, by encouraging early voting, and by offering no-excuse absentee balloting, Connecticut has remained stuck in a time warp. With limited exception, Connecticut still needlessly compels its voters to show up in person on a single day in November in order to exercise a cornerstone of our democracy – the right to vote. But why must we turn ourselves into pretzels to show up on that one day when effective and safe alternatives exist? There is no good reason. The major excuse still pushed today, including by many Connecticut Republicans, is the big lie of “voter fraud” -- and that is what I will focus on.

Remember the Trump/Kobach Commission on “Voter Integrity” that looked high and low to find evidence of widespread voter fraud? It disbanded after finding none. Significantly many states that they looked at had early voting and vote-by mail for years and they came up crickets. And now, if nothing else, the 2020 election puts the lie to this time-worn excuse. Court after court looked at the evidence proffered in Trump’s attempt to overturn election results and without exception courts dismissed every single case. The courts confirmed what every study on the subject has heretofore concluded: **there is no such thing as widespread voter fraud.** And if you think about it, how could it be otherwise? First, we do not have one voting system, we have fifty separate systems each with their own protections. Second, no one could know in advance of counting ballots, the names of individuals on local voter rolls who would not be voting. No one would know in whose name to cast all these non-existent fraudulent ballots. The claim is non-sensical.

And now let’s focus on Connecticut specifically. Connecticut’s 2020 election counted more absentee votes than ever in its history. The election was well run and the election went smoothly. There was no voter fraud that affected the election results in this state and no one has come forth with evidence otherwise. The case is closed on this excuse.

Connecticut voters want both Early Voting and to be able to vote by Absentee Ballot if they so choose. A recent Connecticut public opinion poll conducted by Secure Democracy showed widespread bi-partisan support for both Early Voting and Absentee Ballot Expansion. Connecticut voters want Connecticut to join enlightened states who have figured out how to provide their voters with convenient access to the ballot box through early and no excuse

absentee ballot voting. At a minimum, Connecticut voters want their legislators to let **them** decide if **they** want to make voting more convenient by putting these options on the ballot.

Please do not stand in their way. Please vote **YES** on **HJ 58** in **SUPPORT** of a **Resolution Proposing a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting** which would allow **all** registered voters to choose to **vote by absentee ballot** and in **SUPPORT** of **HJ 59 Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting** which would allow all registered voters to choose to **vote early**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joanna Swomley
Greenwich, CT