

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,

Voting in CT needs to be more convenient for **ALL** CT voters. During the 2020 primary and general elections, as a result of Covid-19, we were given a taste of just how easy, accessible and convenient voting CAN be... but only after living through the stress, again and again, about whether there would be an executive order or legislation to ensure that no voter would have to choose between their health and their right to vote. It became more than obvious how restrictive CT's voting laws are compared to those of other states. We watched as state after state voted early in-person and their voters easily obtained no-excuse absentee ballots. **It was an embarrassment to learn that our great state is one of only a handful of states that does not offer either early voting or unrestricted absentee voting.**

I am imploring you to **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** to allow all registered voters to choose to **vote early**.

By voting YES to these, you are not supporting or opposing Absentee Voting for all. Rather, you are simply voting YES to allow your constituents to express OUR opinion on whether or not WE want voting to be easier, accessible and convenient in CT via a ballot referendum.

I have congenital heart disease and was extremely stressed this year with regard to COVID 19. As I did not have COVID 19, and my illness did not prevent me from voting in the past, I was worried that if I used it as an excuse I could be prosecuted for lying. My parents, who are seniors with compromised health, also loved being able to vote from home and to drop off their ballots in the special drop boxes. I am certain that many voters, like my parents and I, will be thoroughly disappointed when they realize they can no longer vote from home.

Many voters do not understand that if the NEAV legislation does not pass with at least a 75% majority they will have to wait until AT LEAST 2026 for the choice to vote absentee without an excuse. This is unacceptable. Let's bring CT in line with other states and give voters the choice to vote in person on more than one day or by absentee ballot from home. CT voters deserve this.

CT voters clearly want voting to be easy, convenient and accessible. According to the 1/28/21 press release from the Secretary of the State, “73% of Connecticut voters support giving all voters the option to vote by absentee ballot while keeping polling places open, including 79% of voters aged 18 to 34 and 75% of voters aged 65 and up. Despite becoming a polarized, partisan issues during and after the 2020 election, 48% of Republican voters and 44% of Trump voters, along with 75% of unaffiliated voters, 89% of Democrats, and 92% of Biden voters, support expanding access to absentee ballots.” Please do not make us wait any longer.

Thank you,
Alisa Trachtenberg
Ridgefield, CT