

**Testimony Submitted to the
Government Administration & Elections Committee Public Hearing
February 22, 2021
by Judy C. Villa, Resolutions Chair, National Federation of Democratic Women**

Honorable members of the GAE Committee, please accept this testimony in support of House Joint Resolution No. 58 (HJ 58) ***Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting*** and in support of House Joint Resolution No. 59 (HJ 59) ***Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting***.

I am a longtime Cheshire resident and voter in the 13th State Senate District and 89th House District. My support of these two proposals stems from long involvement in advocacy for social and political justice through the legislative process. Having served in local elective office for ten years in the past, I have had the privilege of working closely with state lawmakers who care deeply about the citizens of Connecticut.

Currently, I serve as Resolutions Chairperson on the National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW) and as an editor on the NFDW Legislative Committee, which writes and presents Position Papers to our Congresspersons and state legislators every spring during Women in Blue days in D.C. and in states across the country.

One of the Position papers I am editing addresses the sanctity of voting rights:

“The right to vote is one of the fundamental tenets of our democracy. It is the **NFDW’s position that every American citizen should be able to exercise this right equally under the law.** Originally, these rights were granted only to white males, but over the years hard-won voting rights have been expanded to include women and blacks. Today there is a great deal of evidence that these rights remain at risk. The ideal of one person one vote faces challenges from Congress, states, the courts, and now from outside forces who wish to undermine our democracy.”

The two Joint Resolutions # 58 and # 59 under discussion in the February 22, 2021 Public Hearing clearly address the “challenges” in our state to equal access for all

eligible voters. The “trumped up” argument of voter fraud has been disproven in Connecticut and remains part of a national “big lie” that depends on fear rather than facts and statistics. Our state has fallen behind a majority of other states in enfranchising its citizens through no-excuse AB and early balloting. The pandemic measures in Connecticut promulgated by Executive Order and sanctioned by the GA produced a safe and secure election in 2020. Our state lawmakers owe voters no less going forward. Connecticut may be the “land of steady habits,” but the advancement and expansion of voting rights should remain the cornerstone of democracy in our state as well as in our nation.

Respectfully submitted,

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