

February 21, 2021

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide this written testimony regarding the following Bills in front of you today: H.J. 58, H.J 59, S.B.901 and HB 6464.

I am Dori Wollen, the current Republican Registrar of Voters in Easton. I have been an Easton resident for over 44 years and have been involved both in the Town's political and civic affairs during this time. Unfortunately I missed the deadline to sign up to provide an in-person testimony, hence this note. My comments are as follows:

H.J. 58: I am against a constitutional amendment making no-excuse absentee voting permanent in our State. Voting is a privilege and a duty of every American Citizen. Last year, during the Presidential election, due to Covid-19, the Governor relaxed the absentee excuses and anybody could vote absentee. I personally observed that people who had absolutely no reason to use Covid as an excuse did just that. Staying at home or being at work on election day just because it is more convenient is a very bad idea. Where is the discipline and what kind of example are we teaching our kids? On the flip side, the increase of voting by absentee will not only induce more fraud but it will double the workload of the Town Clerk's office, the Registrars and the Absentee Poll workers. The increased workload requires additional funding via increased budget and ultimately an increase in our taxes. For what? To appease people who find it more convenient to stay away? I urge you to think about this issue long and hard and vote NO.

H.J. 59: Similarly, I am against a constitutional amendment to provide early voting in our State. Every American Citizen knows – the kids learn it in school at an early age - that voting is a privilege and that the first Tues of every November is a national voting day. Frequently schools are closed on election day, businesses give time off to get to the polls in time. Not to mention that in Connecticut the polls are open from 6am to 8pm. How convenient is that? Administering early voting will also increase the work load of the respective departments, needing more funding which at the end will result in higher taxes. As a side issue, how do you expect to handle those voters who want to change their votes whether for the November election or for a budgetary one? How do you expect to control fraud? Budget votes or any other type of referenda come with another set of timing issues where early voting would be next to impossible. I realize that other states in the Union do have early voting. The fact that others do it or have it does not mean that the State of CT has to follow suit. Please vote NO.

S.B.901: Extending Covid related changes to June 30, 2021 is arbitrary. At one point you have to stop and let the chips fall. Yes, overall the State has done well with the controls but we are getting to the point that businesses are hurting more by the day. What is magic about June 30? Why can't you stop at the end of April? One of the issues we as a town find most restricting is public meetings via Zoom. Yes, it is very easy to get on a Zoom call, however, it is NOT the same as having a meeting in person, in a conference room or auditorium. Meetings in person are much more conducive to exchanging ideas and/or resolving issues. It's hard to run a Zoom meeting when a person opts to call in – you have no idea if he/she is a resident. Please vote NO

H.B. 6464: Not sure of the rationale on this extension. The last extension was thru April 20, 2021, I believe. What will another 6 weeks accomplish? Please vote NO.

