



**Government Administration and Elections Committee
Monday, February 22, 2021**

SUPPORT:

House Joint Resolution No. 58 (HJ 58) Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting

No. 59 (HJ 59) Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting

Testimony: Stacey Zimmerman, SEIU CT State Council

Chairs Fox and, Flexer members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Stacey Zimmerman and I am here representing the Service Employees International Union Connecticut State Council. SEIU CT represents 65,000 members both in the public and private sectors; SEIU has over 2 million members in the United States and Canada.

SEIU supports 58 (HJ 58) Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting and (HJ 59) Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Permit Early Voting. We applaud the committee for proposing and hearing legislation on such important matters.

I will not spend my time on the exact language of these two bills but would like to emphasize the importance of expanding the voter enfranchisement in Connecticut. SEIU is proud of our efforts to expand the electorate by encouraging our membership to register and exercise their right to vote. I personally have over 20 years of political and electoral experience and truly believe that we as a state are moving down the correct path to make it easier to use this fundamental right.

Not once in my years of doing this work have my colleagues or I ever had a member of SEIU say, “boy we should make voting much more difficult” or “this system really makes it easy to participate in democracy”. No, we hear “why can’t we do mail in voting, why isn’t election day a holiday, why can’t we vote on the weekend, only one day seems ridiculous.”

These bills essentially start to modernize the voting system while protecting the security of the vote. Gone are the days where the majority of people work and live in the same town and stopping to vote was just down the road. If a delay comes up your vote is gone.

The time for change is now, as we saw on Inauguration Day at the U.S. Capital enfranchisement and democracy must be expanded and taught. These bills do both. The enfranchisement part is obvious in these pieces of legislation the learning moment is passing them and demonstrating Connecticut’s commitment to democracy and the republic. Please support HJ 58 and 59.