



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Raised Bill No. 445, An Act Concerning Permanent Absentee Ballot Status, and Raised Bill No. 444, An Act Concerning Certain Revisions and Technical Changes to the Election Laws, Section 21

I wish to thank the co-chairs of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee for holding a public hearing on these bills. I am grateful also to the Secretary of the State for addressing this issue in Section 21 in her technical revisions bill.

Last year a constituent contacted me to request legislation that would require absentee ballots to be automatically mailed to voters who have permanent disabilities. She told me she must complete a separate application for each election, primary and referendum in order to receive an absentee ballot. She wrote that she considers this situation to be a form of discrimination since people who are able to go to the polls don't have to fill out or sign anything every time they want to vote. She is permanently disabled, and therefore will always require an absentee ballot.

In response to my constituent's request, proposed bill 6004 was introduced in 2007 to remove the obstacles from the procedures surrounding absentee voting for those who are permanently disabled. That bill was referred to the Government Administrations and Elections Committee and then later included in a section of HB 1312, which unfortunately was not called in time for passage.

This year, I am pleased that GAE is considering this issue again and offer this testimony in support of Raised Bill 445 and section 21 of Raised Bill 444. Similar to this previous year, this legislation would eliminate the need for the permanently disabled to make multiple trips to their town hall to request forms for each election, sometimes more than one election in a year, and thus allow them to take part comfortably in a most important civic privilege and responsibility.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of this issue and would be happy to help you in any way move this issue forward. Thanks again for your interest in helping the permanently disabled be more easily a part of the voting process, and please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

