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**GAE Public Hearing  
Friday, March 2, 2011  
Testimony of Ben Florsheim regarding H. J. No. 2  
Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Grant Authority to the  
General Assembly Regarding Election Administration**

Dear Mr. Chair and members of the committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Joint Resolution No. 2. Allowance for early voting and “no-excuse” absentee voting is conducive to increased participation in the democratic process, a goal that Connecticut should always strive towards.

Before I moved to Middletown and switched my registration, I was a registered voter in Wisconsin, one of the many states to allow no-excuse early voting. Every time I have voted there, I did so early. When I first registered, a couple weeks before the primaries were held in advance of the 2010 midterm elections, the city clerk asked to my surprise, “Would you like to vote now as well?” “Sure,” I said, and she produced a primary ballot after I gave her my registration form. I filled it out, and that was that.

I wasn’t alone. Millions of Americans, comprising close to one-third of the electorate, have taken to voting early in recent years for the simple reason that it’s easy. Election Day, which for major elections occurs on the Tuesday after the first Monday of November, was established in 1845. Tuesday was chosen because horse-and-buggy-driving farmers needed Monday to travel to their polling location, Tuesday to vote, and Wednesday to get back home without interfering with the days of worship—it sounds like an urban legend, but it’s true. (November was chosen because the harvest was over by then, but the weather was still mild enough to allow for travel.) Restricting voting to that paradigm makes no sense in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is why most states don’t. Connecticut citizens have to work around their jobs, families, schoolwork, social obligations, and free time to make it to the polls within a tiny window of time. It’s no surprise, then, that Wisconsin and other states with early voting had much higher turnout in 2010 than the 46.8% in Connecticut that then-Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz heralded as “strong.”

Amendments to the state Constitution merit serious and sober consideration, but as major changes go, it would be hard to find one that is more sensible and indisputably beneficial—not to mention overdue—than the one represented by H. J. No. 2. I am proud to stand with the Governor, the Secretary of the State, and the Government Administration and Elections Committee in offering my strong support.