



March 1, 2012

Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Morin, and the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the issues of early voting and election-day registration. I am Raymond Noonan, a nineteen-year-old former resident of Cheshire, Connecticut and current freshman at Yale University. I am writing to you on behalf of the Yale College Democrats in support of **H.J. 2: RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING** and **H.B. 5024: AN ACT CONCERNING VOTING RIGHTS**.

Voting is the core of a functional democracy. It is the most powerful tool citizens of the United States have at their disposal to have their voices heard. If we agree that every citizen deserves the right to participate in the political process that will decide his or her taxes, fund his or her education, and protect his or her family, we must also agree that every citizen has the right to vote, and that guaranteeing this right through voter registration must be as straightforward and accommodating as possible. One of the best ways to do so is to pass election-day registration and no-excuse absentee voting legislation. In states such as North Carolina, similar reforms increased turnout by 7.5 percent in 2008 compared to 2004, the largest increase in the nation.

Election-day registration also pushes both sides toward including all citizens in the political process. Under the current system in Connecticut, political campaigns only focus on attracting and informing registered voters, because this is the only portion of the population that can vote. Election-day registration would make every citizen a potential voter and thus compel campaigns to get as many constituents interested in the race as possible. A more educated and involved electorate is more likely to cast thoughtful, informed ballots, making more likely that the decisions of the state and federal government will reflect the will of the people. In a democracy, this should be our goal.

If as representatives you are to be truly representative of your constituency, you have the duty to ensure that every citizen has had as many opportunities to register to vote as possible. The decisions that legislators make affect every citizen of

Connecticut, and so it is only fair that you give every citizen an opportunity to make their voice heard by passing H.J. 2 and H.B. 5024. The successful implementation of election-day registration and no-excuse absentee voting in other states proves that we can expand rights and better educate our electorate. Let's do so to make all of our voices heard and move towards a greater, more inclusive, and more unified state.

Regards,

Raymond Noonan