

March 10, 2019

Dear Senator Mae Flexer, Representative Daniel J. Fox, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee,

My name is Janet Bryant, and I live in Glastonbury, Connecticut. Please support HJ 161: Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and No-Excuse Absentee Voting.

Three years ago, my husband and I chose to retire in Glastonbury. Prior to that we lived and voted in four western states. The best place to vote was Idaho, which had 10 days of early voting and no restrictions on absentee voting. Usually I voted about a week before Election Day, at a time convenient for me and my employer. I had no trouble parking at the central polling location, experienced no lines, and finished voting in about five minutes, with a smile on my face. I didn't have to worry that on Election Day, the weather could be poor, or that I might not be able to get out of work in time to vote, or that my employer would unexpectedly send me out of town, or that I might become sick and unable to leave the house to vote.

Now I'm retired and a poll worker in Glastonbury, and can see that early voting and no-excuse absentee voting could provide more benefits than just voter convenience. Currently most voting activity takes place on a single day. Spreading out voters gives the voting system more time to deal with voter registration errors and system glitches, reduces stress on poll workers and helps improve their performance, avoids long lines on Election Day, and produces more satisfied voters, who are more likely to keep voting and stay civically engaged.

Would it cost more to have early voting? It's hard to say. In my experience, usually only one polling station is open during early voting instead of multiple polling stations, so the added expense might not be much. Also, if enough voters take advantage of early voting, perhaps fewer poll workers would be needed on Election Day.

As consumers, we're usually willing to pay a little extra for convenience. In this case, a little extra could provide big benefits in addition to voter convenience: a more accurate, less stressful voting system, and a more civically engaged populace.

Thank you for listening to my testimony, and please vote yes on HJ 161.

Best regards,

Janet Bryant
Glastonbury, Connecticut

