

**Testimony of
Mary Consoli, RN, BSN
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HJ 161

RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING AND NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

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

I am writing to ask you to support HJ 161 to allow early voting in the State of Connecticut. I am a Registered Nurse, and have volunteered for the Danbury Democratic Town Committee to execute an emergency ballot for voters who cannot physically get out to the poles. I have served in this capacity for 20 years. Most of the circumstances have been for emergency medical reasons. An elderly voter becomes ill, falls or in one particular instance was in a car accident and wanted to vote once he returned home from the Emergency Department. The people responsible for him would not take him to the polls.

I personally was impacted 14 years ago, while taking care of my elderly mother who lived in Massachusetts, a three hour drive from Danbury. I left her bedside to drive back to Danbury in order to vote, then drove back to Massachusetts.

There are hospitals in Connecticut that have mandatory overtime in certain situations for Registered Nurses and other Health Care workers. If mandated, the employee cannot leave to go vote. If a construction worker, plumber or other type of laborer is in the middle of a job that encounters a problem, s/he cannot leave the job, they would not be able to cast a vote. Early voting and no –excuse absentee voting would ensure all workers and voters of Connecticut the ability to vote.

It would be easier for parents with babies and young children to be able to vote, it is difficult to bring these children to the poles. It would be easier for the elderly. If there is a snow storm predicted, all towns declare a snow emergency, how can people get out and vote safely? Schools will be closed, roads would not be plowed. The results of any election should not be impacted by a snow storm, rain or other inclement weather. This does not provide the best conditions for voter turnout, early voting would resolve this situation.

Connecticut should join the growing number of states that have early voting.

I ask you to pass HJ 161, Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and No-Excuse Absentee Voting.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Mary Consoli