

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

My name is Sydney Elkhay. I live in Mansfield, Connecticut. I am a UConn student, and I am in support of HJ 161: the Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and No-Excuse Absentee voting.

I believe that this is an extremely important bill that must be passed if we are to increase voter turnout in the future and encourage civic engagement in the residents of Connecticut. During the 2018 election cycle, I registered a lot of people to vote and participated extensively in getting people to the polls on election day, and I have seen first hand that the current system does not work. I encountered many students who were unable to vote in the election due to the restrictive election laws. I met several students who were in class all day on election day and who were unable to take the time off to go to the polls. I also talked to several commuter students who were not able to make it back to their hometown after their classes and still have time to register to vote, which negates the entire purpose of same-day registration. My roommate and several of her friends spent 2 hours standing in line at the polls, and I myself encountered extensively long lines despite voting in the early morning. I heard that many people spent hours standing in line to vote and that many people had to leave the voting booth in order to attend classes or go to work. It is absolutely necessary that we allow for early voting and no-excuse absentee voting because it is inexcusable that people have to spend several hours in the middle of the week standing in line to vote, which means that voting is something that many people cannot possibly do. By not allowing for early voting, we are preventing people from being able to participate in their own government. Additionally, early voting is an extremely popular measure, that is supported by 80% of Americans. This is an extremely popular concept that will make it significantly easier for people to exercise their civic duty and that will make sure that people can participate actively in their government. This is especially necessary because employers in Connecticut are not required to give people time off on election day to vote, so if this bill is passed it will enable many more working adults to be able to vote, which will simply make voting a more accessible thing. This will also enable elderly and sick people to vote at a time that is more convenient or through absentee ballots, which are more accessible to those who cannot get to the polls.

I support HJ 161 and hope the committee will vote favorably.

Thank you for your time,

Sydney Elkhay, UConn Democrats