

Tom Fuchs
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Milford, CT 06460

March 7, 2019

Chairpersons, Flexer and Fox, and Vice Chairs and Committee Members
Government Administration and Elections Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 2200
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Written Testimony Regarding **HJR 161**

Dear Chairpersons, Flexer, Fox and Vice Chairs and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of a Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and No-Excuse Absentee Voting.

My name is Tom Fuchs. I am a Milford resident, civics' activist, and have resided in CT since 1974. I strongly support HJR 161.

For nearly 50 years, I have never failed to vote in a presidential election. I wish I could say the same for state and local elections. Working long hours in full-time positions, commuting over an hour per day, raising a family, and frequent, work-related travel significantly constrained my time. Consequently, getting to the polls on Election Day was always a challenge. In fact, I never voted in a municipal election until recently, and it is difficult to remember when I participated in state elections prior to November 2018.

Today, as age sets in and mobility and energy begin to diminish, getting to the polls is almost as difficult as in the past. Even though I've taken great pride in casting my ballot in national elections, I have only recently come to realize the importance of making my voice heard in every election, every year.

As a retired citizen, I now have more time to study the issues and form an educated opinion. But the challenges and inconvenience of being able to vote only in-person, and only one day per year, continue to persist.

My research has confirmed that my voting behavior is not an anomaly. I have discovered that voter turnout in CT has declined almost continuously over nearly the last 60 years. For example, voter turnout in our state was over 93% in the 1960 Presidential Election.¹ Municipal turnout has declined long term to only about 30% statewide.²

I believe that these trends can be addressed by allowing all of us more flexibility to cast a vote and participate in our democracy. Having several days to vote, in addition to Election Day, will make it easier for me and many others.

Finally, I believe that a true democracy represents the will of the majority. Maximizing voter participation makes our democracy more representative, and it is in our collective best interest to have it reflect the views of as many of us as possible. Many lives have been lost to ensure that we can vote in this republic. The least CT can do is make voting easier.

It's time to join 39 states and give us greater access to voting by making it more convenient.³ We all should have a say in bringing early voting to CT. I urge you to consider your constituents' wishes and vote in favor of HJR 161 so it can proceed to a referendum in 2020.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Tom Fuchs
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¹ CT Secretary of State https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SOTS/ElectionServices/StatementOfVote_PDFs/1960SOVpdf.pdf?la=en

² CT Secretary of State <https://ctemspublic.pcctg.net/#/home>

³ National Conference of State Legislatures <http://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx>