



Testimony of Jan Hochadel
President, AFT Connecticut

HB 5418 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the State Contracting standards Board
HJ 161 Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting
and NO-Excuse Absentee Voting

Government Administrations and Elections Committee
March 13, 2019

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and members of the Government Administrations and Elections Committee. I am Jan Hochadel and am President of AFT Connecticut, a diverse state federation of more than 30,000 public and private sector employees; which includes state workers, healthcare workers, public school teachers, paraeducators, and higher education faculty and staff.

AFT Connecticut supports **HJ 161 Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and NO-Excuse Absentee Voting**. This resolution would be the first step in working towards early voting in Connecticut. The Secretary of the State believes we must first amend the constitution to require a minimum of three days of early voting prior to Election Day and second it would remove language about absentee ballots that is duplicated in state statute.

Millions of Americans are given a single day to vote. That day is a Tuesday — a work day, when voting will inevitably be squeezed in among errands, childcare, and jobs. Unsurprisingly, the result is chaos at the polls when work typically gets out, infuriatingly long lines, and mistakes by overwhelmed election officials. Early voting eases congestion on Election Day, leading to shorter lines, improved poll worker performance, and improved voter satisfaction. It also allows for earlier correction of registration errors and voting system glitches

More than two-thirds of the states--39 plus the District of Columbia--offer some sort of early voting. Early voting allows voters to visit an election official's office or, in some states, other satellite voting locations, and cast a vote in person without offering an excuse for why the voter is unable to vote on Election Day. Connecticut is not one of these states.

The time period for early voting varies from state to state:

- The date on which early voting begins may be as early as 45 days before the election, or as late as the Friday before the election. The average starting time for early voting is 22 days before the election.
- Early voting typically ends just a few days before Election Day.
- Early voting periods range in length from four days to 45 days; the average length is 19 days.
- Of the states that allow early in-person voting, 24 and the District of Columbia allow some weekend early voting.
 - Saturday: 20 states + the District of Columbia provide for voting on Saturday. 4 additional states (California, Kansas, Vermont and Massachusetts) leave it up to county clerks who may choose to allow Saturday voting.
 - Sunday: 5 states (Alaska, Illinois, Maryland, New York, and Ohio) allow for Sunday voting. 5 states (California, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Massachusetts) leave it up to county clerks who may choose to be open on Sundays. Florida mandates early voting must begin, including Sunday, the 10th day and end the 3rd day prior t
 - o the election for state and federal elections. Local election officials also have discretion to allow early voting the Sunday prior to the election.

Please support House Resolution 161 so we can start working on details of how early voting should be designed in Connecticut; including hours of voting, the number of polling places and what days early voting will be held.

AFT Connecticut also supports **HB 5418 An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the State Contracting Standards Board**. This bill would implement recommendations from the 2018 report from the State Contracting Standard Board which would require the Contracting Standards Board be informed of any bid waiver as well as lets the Board appoint a Chief Procurement Auditor. These two recommendations as well as fully funding of the Contracting Standards Board is integral to making the Contract Standards Board run more effectively which in return will help to save the State of Connecticut millions of dollars.

Thank you