

Written Testimony

Support of HJ 161

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO PERMIT EARLY VOTING

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Rhea Klein, Ph.D., learning specialist, who has resided in Connecticut for more than 60 years and have no intention of leaving the state that I love.

I am submitting this testimony in support of HJ 161, the bill to have Connecticut amend its constitution to institute early voting.

I'm a concerned Connecticut voter who strongly supports this amendment because I believe that Connecticut voters, like the voters in 39 states plus the District of Columbia, should have access to voting on more than the one particular Tuesday that currently exists. Furthermore, most of my friends and associates representing all political views agree with this stance. This view is supported by many organizations, most notably the League of Women Voters, the Brennan Center for Justice and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The purpose of early voting is first and foremost to allow access for eligible and registered citizens to vote. This provides registered voters greater opportunity to vote and less congestion and confusion at the polls. In addition, it was reported by the Brennan Center for Justice that one third of the voters in the 2016 election took advantage of this opportunity.

Those opponents of early voting express the concern that there will be voter fraud. However, evidence that voter fraud in any significant way due to early voting is nonexistent. In fact, the likelihood of fraud decreases as the volume of voting is dispersed over time. Analysis of reports from election officials indicated that early voting reduces the administrative burdens of the Election Day rush, keeps elections safe and secure.

The concern regarding additional costs has been address by the Secretary of State, Denise Merrill. She reports that any additional costs incurred will be made up with corresponding decreases on election day.

Finally, the fear that voters may cast a ballot without all knowledge of the most immediate events is out weighed by the fact that early voting will be limited to less that 7 days over no more than 2 weeks unlike other states that have extended voting timelines.

On a personal note, I have a disabled brother who resides in the Boston area. He has had health issues that require me to stay with him for days at a time. I would certainly vote early in the case that I was needed on election day to support my brother. If this option isn't available, I might loose my opportunity to vote.

In conclusion, as a life long resident of Connecticut, I strongly urge the legislature to amend the State of Connecticut

Respectfully,
Rhea Klein, Ph.D.