

## Testimony in Support of S.J. No. 27 and H.J. 161

Dear Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the GAE Committee:

My name is Kara O'Rourke, and I am a first-year student at Yale University from Darien, CT. I serve as Treasurer for the Yale chapter of Every Vote Counts, a student-led, nonpartisan, voting rights and engagement organization.

I am testifying in support of both the Senate Joint Resolution No. 27, *Resolution Proposing A State Constitutional Amendment Allowing For No-Excuse Absentee Voting*, and the House Joint Resolution No. 161, *Resolution Proposing An Amendment To The State Constitution To Allow For Early Voting And No-Excuse Absentee Voting*. (Note that the former bill becomes redundant with the passage of the latter.) I strongly support this legislation because I believe it would encourage and enable broader participation in Connecticut elections.

My earliest political memory is standing in line with my brothers and my mom to vote at a local high school in the suburbs of Stamford, CT. She told us to pack a backpack full of toys, and for herself, an armful of newspapers, because the line was so long. The wait was at least an hour by my memory, but statistics show lines are often much longer, especially in understaffed, urban, under-funded polling locations. My family is fortunate to be a single-income household, so at least my mom was able to sacrifice several hours from her schedule to vote every year. However, many other families in Connecticut—especially those working multiple jobs—do not have the luxury or even the sheer flexibility to spend hours waiting in line on a weekday. Like early voting, accessible absentee voting would shorten lines, and provide flexibility to those who have little flexibility themselves.

No-Excuse Absentee Voting would make it easier for citizens to vote, even if their difficulties do not fall under previously-outlined conditions of absence, sickness, disability, or religion. This would include inflexible and demanding work hours, difficult-to-access polling locations, mental illness (such as debilitating anxiety, which affects several of my friends), and more. Furthermore, voters may be more likely to research candidates and make more educated decisions if able to consider the ballot from the comfort of their home.

I strongly support both bills S.J. No. 27 and H.J. No. 161 and urge you to favorable vote the bill out of the GAE Committee.

Sincerely,  
Kara O'Rourke  
Darien, CT