

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

My name is Charles Perosino, I am a resident of Tolland, Connecticut, and a sophomore at the University of Connecticut. I am testifying in support of HJ 161: RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY VOTING AND NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING. I volunteered extensively around the 2018 elections here in Connecticut, and saw first-hand the negative impacts that our state's limitations on voting have. This past year's election saw record voter turnout, greatly exceeding the expectations of most analysts. Our state offers Election Day Registration, a great benefit to many working adults and college students. On the University of Connecticut campus, student groups were able to register over 1,700 new voters this past cycle, and over 4,000 voters from the University showed up at the polls on Election Day. As a campaign volunteer present during the day, it was clear that the number of voters at the Mansfield Community Center near the University, as well as same-day registrants at the Town Hall, was unexpected and not something that town officials were properly prepared for. In addition to students, I met working parents in line registering to vote. No matter the reason as to why someone has yet to register, as proponents of democracy, we should make it as easy and accessible, yet still verifiable, to vote. Instituting early voting would undoubtedly lessen the burden on municipalities to verify and process thousands of same-day applications, and also allow for a period for town officials to be as prepared as possible for Election Day itself. Many students who came to vote on Election Day, perhaps their first time in Mansfield, showed up with the wrong paperwork to register, came with the intention of voting for candidates from other districts, would leave line to attend class, and were otherwise unprepared to vote, often unable to register. Had an early voting period taken place, both students and working adults would have had the opportunity to vote during that period at their convenience, as well as so many citizens who may not have chosen to vote on Election Day, but otherwise would have if more time were available than the traditional polling hours. Today, 39 states, as well as the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, offer early voting in some form. Numerous polls have shown that early voting has the support of more than 80% of the public, enjoying supermajority support among Democratic, Republican, and unaffiliated voters. Our state has seen great success in both Election Day Registration and registering voters at the DMV; early voting is the next logical step here in Connecticut, and I urge you to support this amendment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Charles Perosino
Tolland, CT