

Dear the Members of the Connecticut General Assembly Government Administration and Elections Committee,

I am a professor of government at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut, and I am writing testimony with information relating to House Joint Resolution No. 161, which would lay the groundwork for changing Connecticut's constitution to allow for "no-excuse" early voting, allowing any eligible Connecticut voter to cast a ballot before Election Day without providing a reason for needing to do so.

As a political scientist, I study voting reforms designed to make the voting process more convenient for voters. It is my understanding that opening up the possibility of adding "no-excuse" early voting to Connecticut's electoral process will be beneficial for voters and for voter turnout in Connecticut. In particular, there is evidence suggesting that Same Day Voter Registration and "no-excuse" early voting— when both available to voters as they would be in Connecticut should early voting come to pass—can have a positive impact on the likelihood of individuals turning out to vote and overall voter turnout levels. Given that Connecticut already allows Same Day Voter Registration, a logical next step would be to lay the groundwork to adopt "no-excuse" early voting and further capitalize on the benefits of Same Day Voter Registration. This would improve an electoral system that has already made significant gains in easing access to voting by implementing Same Day Voter Registration, adding more options for voters unable to cast ballots on Election Day who are not currently covered by Connecticut's excuse based "absentee voting" system.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions regarding my testimony. I can be reached at csuttmann@conncoll.edu or by phone at 773-655-5128.

Best,

Mara Suttman-Lea

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