

March 8, 2019

Chairpersons, Flexer, and Fox, and Committee Members  
Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Written Testimony in Support of the Early Voting Amendment, HJR 161**

Dear Chairpersons Flexer, and Fox, and Committee Members:

My name is Joanna Swomley and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HJR 161, a “Resolution Proposing an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting and No-Excuse Absentee Voting.”

I moved to Connecticut with my family in 2001. I commuted to Manhattan to work long hours as a law firm partner until 2004 when I left to spend full time with my young children. I missed voting in many elections during this time. When I commuted to Manhattan, given nanny coverage and work start time I could neither vote before heading to work nor could I depend on getting home before the polls closed in time to vote after work. When I was home with my children, I similarly could not reliably depend on being able to get to the polls. For example, if a child were home sick, I could not leave him. Nor could I rely on a spouse getting home from his work in Manhattan in time to relieve me. In short, being able to rely on getting to the polls on any given day is simply not possible for a large chunk of Connecticut voters like me. And I want to vote. I believe we have a duty as Americans to participate in our democracy.

Now I turn to the question of “why can’t we have early voting like 40 other states?” Why can’t we make voting easier and more convenient? If we care about the right to vote, and want to encourage democratic participation, then we need to pass this legislation. Unless legislators affirmatively want to continue to make it really, really hard for some people to vote, for reasons I cannot fathom – each legislator needs to vote to pass this legislation. And, finally, even if some legislators have reservations, you should still vote to pass this legislation so the question can go to the voters and they can decide. A vote against this legislation in my view is anti-democratic as it will take the choice away from the voters themselves.

It's time to join 40 states and give us greater access to voting by making it more convenient here in CT. I urge you to consider your constituents wishes, vote in favor of (Senate/House Bill #), and allow us to have a say on early voting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Joanna Swomley  
Greenwich, CT 06831  
203-661-1488  
[joswomley2@gmail.com](mailto:joswomley2@gmail.com)

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