

**Government Administration and Elections Committee  
JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT**

**Bill No.:** SJ-27

RESOLUTION PROPOSING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

**Title:** ALLOWING FOR NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

**Vote Date:** 3/20/2019

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable

**PH Date:** 3/13/2019

**File No.:**

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

**SPONSORS OF BILL:**

**Government Administration and Elections Committee**

**Co-Sponsors**

Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56<sup>th</sup> Dist.

**REASONS FOR BILL:**

To allow for more electors to vote via absentee ballot by removing from the State Constitution the restrictions currently in place.

**RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

None expressed.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Rep. Christine Conley, 40<sup>th</sup> Dist.:** testified that she believes in making voting as simple and easy as possible for the electorate. She described a dilemma she had a few years ago where she was representing a client in court and that although she would be unable to make it in person to the polls, she did not technically meet the requirements to obtain an absentee ballot.

**Rep. Lucy Dathan, 142<sup>nd</sup> Dist.:** described her experiences of voting while abroad and in California as a permanent absentee voter. She believes our voting regulations are outdated and need to be modernized for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Sal Luciano, President, AFL-CIO Connecticut:** testified that electors are often too busy with work and family responsibilities to get to the polls, and that Connecticut is one of only seventeen states that don't protect an employee's right to vote in person.

**Kara O'Rourke, Treasurer, Yale Chapter of Every Vote Counts:** testified that she remembers as a child standing in line with her mother at the polling place for a considerable amount of time. She stated that many electors with families or those who work multiple jobs may not have that flexibility. She also pointed out that urban areas may have even longer lines and less accessible polling locations.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**Mark Bernacki, Legislative Committee Chair, Connecticut Town Clerks Association(CTCA):** testified in strong opposition to any Constitutional resolution that would create a no excuse absentee ballot system. He pointed out that about five percent of absentee ballots get rejected for various reasons, and reasoned that with more absentee ballots being cast, the number of disenfranchised voters would rise.

**Luther Weeks, Executive Director, CTVotersCount:** testified that absentee ballot fraud is already a problem, that would only increase with a no excuse system. He cited recent cases of fraud in Bridgeport, Hartford, and Stamford.

**Joseph Hriczo, Bolton:** testified that recent elections have had a number of instances of absentee ballot fraud, and that reducing the strictures currently in place for obtaining an absentee ballot would only serve to decrease the public's confidence in our electoral system.

**Also expressing opposition:**

Harold Douglas, New Britain  
Chas Catania

**Reported by: Melissa Russell  
Assistant Clerk**

**Date: 4/11/19**