

Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Luther Weeks, Executive Director of CTVotersCount, a computer scientist, and a Certified Moderator. Since 2007, I have organized citizens to observe and independently report on eighteen statewide post-election audits.

We oppose bills like S.J.27 based on concerns with the proven risks of expanded mail-in voting, in any form, in Connecticut.

See our testimony in 2017 which outlines our concerns, past recommendations, and the caution that the best science indicates early voting, in any form, tends to DECREASE turnout: <https://tinyurl.com/CTVCEV2017>

When Connecticut passed the Citizens Election Program, part of the justification was a past history of campaign finance problems. Similarly avoiding expanded main-in voting is justified by Connecticut's ongoing record of voting¹ fraud via absentee ballots. This trend continues. Over the last year there were significant cases of voting fraud in Bridgeport², Hartford³, and Stamford⁴.

We support H.R.161 because it addresses our concerns.

There are two reasonable forms of in-person early voting possible in Connecticut. Both would be possible under H.R.161.

1. Polling-place Early Voting. Polling-place early voting provides voters with the same voting experience they now have on election day: A fully staffed polling-place with moderator, assistant registrars, checkers, ballot clerks, and a voting machine tender, along with a voting system for those with disabilities. Voters would cast their vote in a scanner that can detect overvotes and other errors, providing an opportunity correct such errors by voting again. Everyone in the polling-place observes the operation while the polling-place is open.

Polling-place early voting greatly increases costs with all that staffing, especially in towns with one or a few polling-places. There would be a need for extensive security requirements for scanners and ballots when such polling-places are closed and changes in closing procedures to delay printing results until after election day polling-places are closed.

2. In-person Absentee Voting. Allowing no-excuse absentee voting in municipal clerk's offices, as is allowed now, for excuse absentee voting. The law should require a system be setup for those with disabilities. In-person absentee voting would be much less costly than early polling-place voting and would not require new procedures or extensive changes in the law. In-person early voting would provide most of the benefits of polling-place voting. Yet it would be a reasonable tradeoff for the lower costs.

If the amendment passes, in the future we would recommend the method of in-person absentee voting. With a reminder that:

- Any type of in-person early voting should entail a review and improvement in Connecticut's inadequate laws for polling-place ballot and absentee ballot security .
- All absentee and early voting ballots, currently exempt, should be included in post-election audits.

Thank you.

¹ It is important to distinguish what we call votER fraud and votING fraud. VotER fraud implies fraud accomplished by single individuals who intentionally vote illegally. We define votING fraud as multiple fraudulent votes perpetrated by political insiders or officials. VotER fraud is all but non-existent in the United States. Unfortunately, votING fraud via absentee voting is quite common in Connecticut.

² <http://ctvoterscount.org/CTVCdata/18/01/CTPost20180126.pdf>

³ <https://www.courant.com/politics/elections/hc-news-minnie-gonzalez-seec-20180809-story.html>

⁴ <https://www.stamfordadvocate.com/local/article/Former-Democratic-Party-boss-charged-with-13573967.php?>