Senator Mae Flexer  
Representative Daniel J. Fox  
Co-Chairs

Senator Rob Sampson  
Representative Mike France  
Ranking Members

Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2200  
Hartford, CT 06106

February 26, 2020

Dear Co-Chairs Flexer and Fox and Ranking Members Sampson and France:

I write to urge you to pass S.B. 233 An Act Concerning Elections. My name is Atticus Ballesteros. I live at 200 Park St. #1 New Haven, CT 06511. I am young: twenty-four years old. My community and I believe in the importance of this bill. At a time when many young people have serious concerns about the state of our democracy, this bill makes a remarkable and emphatic statement that we do in fact live in a strong and safe democracy.

I say this for two reasons. First: the right to vote is constituent to all other rights. Without it, our system of governance has no basis in legitimacy. Fundamentally, it is a right to vote—not a right to register to vote. Like all other fundamental rights, this one must be ensured at all costs. Any barriers that stand in the way of citizens seeking to exercise it—especially when barriers such as registration cut across race and class—must be eliminated. The AVR system is the way to do just that.

Second: this is a democracy that we live in. And it is my belief that this country does not stop being a democracy the moment that a person commits a crime. A person may have committed an egregious wrong against the community. But they are still a member of the community. They may lose certain privileges and immunities as a result of their actions. But they must not lose their voice. Parolees—those who have completed a sentence of confinement and are now transitioning out of jail—have a substantial stake in the political and economic world of which they are a part. What the world is going to provide them, and what they can make of it, will have a direct impact on their success during and after parole. As members of our community—our democracy—parolees must have the right to vote. S.B. 233 is the way to do just that.

I thank you for considering my words, and I wholeheartedly urge you to support our democracy by supporting S.B. 233.

Atticus Ballesteros  
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New Haven, CT 06511