

To Whom It May Concern,

I disagree with the expanding no-excuse absentee voting, because while I support safe absentee voting, before it is expanded we need to address Connecticut's long history of absentee ballot fraud, with arrests as recently as last year.

When 2020's expanded absentee voting passed the state Senate, Sen. Dennis Bradley (D-Bridgeport) dissented "after he criticized a culture of absentee ballot shenanigans in his hometown, particularly remembering an election he lost when 60 votes were recorded from an empty lot." (CT Post, 7/28/20)

Last year Senator Marilyn Moore accused incumbent Bridgeport Mayor and ex-con Joe Ganim of misusing absentee ballots to steal the Democrat mayoral primary. Multiple witnesses testified that they never requested an absentee ballot, but the judge somehow concluded Sen Moore failed to prove her claims. The CT Democrat establishment rallied around Ganim as he was awarded the nomination, with many of the advocates for no-excuse absentee voting endorsing him. A year later and Joe Ganim has already been embroiled in another corruption scandal. Would Bridgeport have been better off under Marilyn Moore's leadership?

I don't think either of these state senators were lying in their claims, but absentee fraud seems more difficult to prove than arson, with legal ballot harvesting breaking any chain of custody. Despite this there have still been recent arrests in Connecticut. Locally I won my first election in 2013 by only seven votes, and was just four votes behind the next council member. Last year results were even closer, with a seat decided by just one vote. These races show you cannot dismiss any instances of fraud as insignificant.

I support everyone's right to vote and encourage them to do so. I believe we should be as accommodating as we can be, as long as we can assure election security and maintain the confidence of the electorate. Voters need to believe elections are fair and the instances above undermine and disenfranchise voters and candidates. Members of both parties have criticized elections in recent years, and we should all strive to investigate irregularities and put safeguards in place to assuage voter concerns. Anyone calling for unity would be wise to ensure no one feels cheated. Until that is done expanding absentee voting creates more opportunities for the sort of abuses seen across our state and concern is warranted.

My opinions are my own as an individual and not on behalf of the Legislative Council of which I am a member.

Best Regards,

Ryan Knapp

Sandy Hook, CT

Sent from my iPhone