



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 288

January Session, 2023

House Joint Resolution No. 1

House of Representatives, March 28, 2023

The Committee on Government Administration and Elections reported through REP. BLUMENTHAL of the 147th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the joint resolution ought to be adopted.

RESOLUTION APPROVING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.

Resolved by this Assembly:

1 Section 1. WHEREAS, at the 2021 regular session of the General
2 Assembly of the state of Connecticut, said General Assembly did
3 approve, by at least a majority, but by less than three-fourths, of the total
4 membership of each house, a resolution proposing an amendment to the
5 Constitution of the State which amendment, in accordance with article
6 sixth of the amendments to the Constitution, was published in the
7 manner prescribed therein and continued to the present regular session
8 of the General Assembly, and which resolution is as follows:

9 "Resolved by this Assembly:

10 Section 1. That the following be proposed as an amendment to the
11 Constitution of the State, which, when approved and adopted in the
12 manner provided by the Constitution, shall, to all intents and purposes,
13 become a part thereof:

14 Section 7 of article sixth of the Constitution is amended to read as
15 follows:

16 Sec. 7. The general assembly may provide by law for voting in the
17 choice of any officer to be elected or upon any question to be voted on
18 at an election by qualified voters of the state who [are unable to] will not
19 appear at the polling place on the day of election, [because of absence
20 from the city or town of which they are inhabitants or because of
21 sickness or physical disability or because the tenets of their religion
22 forbid secular activity.]

23 RESOLVED: That the foregoing proposed amendment to the
24 Constitution be continued to the next session of the General Assembly
25 elected at the general election to be held on November 8, 2022, and
26 published with the laws passed at the present session, or be presented
27 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 8, 2022,
28 whichever the case may be, according to article sixth of the amendments
29 to the Constitution. The designation of said proposed amendment to be
30 used on the ballots at such election shall be "Shall the Constitution of the
31 State be amended to permit the General Assembly to allow each voter
32 to vote by absentee ballot?"

33 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS ASSEMBLY: That
34 the said amendment so proposed is approved and that it be presented
35 to the electors at the general election to be held on November 5, 2024.

GAE *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

This bill has no fiscal impact. There is no direct cost associated with placing the amendment on the ballot as the election will be held on existing election days.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis**HJ 1****RESOLUTION APPROVING A STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING.****SUMMARY**

This resolution proposes a constitutional amendment to remove the state constitution's current restrictions on absentee voting. Under these restrictions, the General Assembly may pass a law allowing electors to cast their vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place because of absence from the town where they reside, sickness or physical disability, or the tenets of their religion prohibit secular activity on election day. The General Assembly exercised this authority and passed provisions codified in CGS § 9-135 (see BACKGROUND).

The ballot designation to be used when the amendment is presented at the general election is: "Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly to allow each voter to vote by absentee ballot?"

EFFECTIVE DATE: If the resolution passes by a majority of the membership of each house, it will appear on the 2024 general election ballot. If a majority of those voting on the amendment in the general election approves it, the amendment will become part of the state constitution.

BACKGROUND***Related Resolution***

SJ 29, reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, is identical to this resolution.

Absentee Voting

CGS § 9-135 permits qualified electors to vote by absentee ballot if they are unable to appear at their polling place on the day of an election, primary, election, or referendum because of the following:

1. they are absent from the town in which they reside;
2. sickness or physical disability;
3. the tenets of their religion forbid secular activity on the day of the primary, election, or referendum;
4. they are in active service in the U.S. Armed Forces; or
5. they are primary, election, or referendum officials outside of their voting district, and their duties will keep them away during all hours of voting.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 13 Nay 6 (03/15/2023)