



**Testimony in Support of:
HB 5001: An Act Concerning Absentee Voting for All and
Various Other Reforms to the Administration of Elections**

Government Administration and Elections Committee
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President & CEO, Fairfield County's Community Foundation**

Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. Fairfield County's Community Foundation is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **HB 5001: An Act Concerning Absentee Voting for All and Various Other Reforms to the Administration of Elections**.

[Fairfield County's Community Foundation](#) serves the 23 towns and cities in Fairfield County. We work closely with community organizations, nonprofits, businesses, and philanthropists to address challenges and identify opportunities to create a Fairfield County where everyone has a fair opportunity to thrive. Informed by three decades of partnering with and serving our community, we have awarded over \$420 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond.

The Community Foundation believes that thriving communities need empowered individuals who vote, speak up, and get involved in community change. This is why we invest in voter education initiatives, support civic engagement, and champion efforts that help more people exercise their voting power.

The Foundation has led Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns focused on educating and engaging Fairfield County residents about the importance of voting and the integrity of our election system. A core goal of this work is to help individuals, especially those who have historically been underrepresented in the political process, create a plan to vote and make their voices heard in local, state, and federal elections. We believe H.B. 5001 directly supports and advances these goals.

Under current law, Connecticut voters may cast an absentee ballot only for limited reasons, including active military service, absence from town, sickness, physical disability, religious prohibitions, or duties as an election official outside their assigned polling place. These strict parameters create unnecessary barriers for many eligible voters who want to cast a ballot but face logistical or personal obstacles on Election Day.

These limitations fail to reflect the realities of modern life. For example:

- Irregular or demanding work schedules, combined with long lines at polling locations, can deter voters.
- Many workers struggle to secure time off to vote.

- Voters who rely on public transportation, older adults, and individuals with disabilities may find it difficult or impossible to travel to a polling place, especially in adverse weather.
- These challenges are often magnified in under-resourced communities, where transportation barriers, job inflexibility, and other systemic factors have historically contributed to lower turnout.

Connecticut is increasingly out of step with national practices. According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), 28 states allow “no-excuse” absentee voting, and eight states plus Washington, D.C. conduct elections entirely by mail, automatically sending ballots to registered voters. Broader access to absentee ballots is both common and effective across the country.

Our democracy works best when as many eligible residents as possible have easy, secure access to the ballot. With proper planning and resources, Connecticut can and should extend this access to all voters. With adequate resources and preparation, there is no reason Connecticut can’t offer unrestricted access to absentee ballots.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 5001**. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Elaine Mintz, VP of Strategy and External Relations, at emintz@fccfoundation.org or 203-750-3209.

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