

## TESTIMONY RE: LCO 3576 ABSENTEE BALLOTS

The right to vote is inherent in the the founding of our nation. In addition to protecting our franchise, vote-by-mail aka absentee ballots has become a safety issue. Voting by mail would eliminate exposure or exposing other people and makes it easier for the elderly and the ill to vote. Why would anyone want to demand citizens have to choose between contracting a deadly virus or the ability to exercise their right to vote during these dire times?

Absentee voting is not new. It dates back to the Civil War. Federal law requires states to provide by-mail/absentee ballots to military and overseas voters. The Military, members of Congress. countless officials, voters away from home or those who are seriously ill can vote by mail. Their rights have been upheld and secured by virtue of the absentee ballot.

Technological advances have made the process simpler and on target. Optical scanning mechanisms give further countenance to counting mail-in votes. Further on the plus side, local jurisdictions would save money by not having to staff polling places and the additional costs for voting equipment.

Those who oppose vote-by-mail point to fraud due to inaccuracies of voter registration rolls and opportunities for outside coercion or impersonation. Yes, towns will have to exercise stringent oversight, but this has always been the case. Planning is vital to ensure Ballots are mailed out well ahead of Election Day and that voters have an election period of time rather than a single day vote. The alternative is not to be able to vote at all!

Respectfully Submitted by  
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