

Dear CGA GAE members:

I appreciate the effort to expand the use of absentee ballots during the pandemic but believe that the proposed bill language is too limiting. People should not have to choose between their public health and safety and exercising their right to vote.

As currently written, the bill has two flaws:

- Section 1A3 notes that the illness must be elector's illness which prevents going to the polls. With this pandemic, the issue is the *exposure* to a communicable disease, not solely whether the elector currently has the disease/illness.
- Section 1A7 provides reference to 2020 only, COVID specifically and solely cites WHO. Again, too limiting because there are many types of communicable diseases (some we may not even know yet!), it's not just WHO but also the US Centers for Disease Control that should be referenced as there could be a communicable disease outbreak that starts in the US. Additionally limiting it to "state election" and "2020" means that if this virus extends into 2021 or a new communicable disease occurs in the future that the legislature has to reconvene again – is that efficient government? The language should be broadly written in terms such as "And for any elections for which diseases designated by the World Health Organization and/or US Centers for Disease Control classify as communicable diseases."

I would also like to state my staunch support the use of absentee ballots for *any* reason. Throughout the United States, Election Day is not always conducted in the traditional way of going to a designated polling place in a voter's district as in Connecticut. Over thirty states allow early voting. In Connecticut, the absentee ballot has been used for many years and the process is well established.

Please amend the bill to enable use of the ballot as noted above. Thank for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Dunson
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