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To whom it may concern:

Vote by mail is a method that works well in theory, but never in practice. *Fraud* in vote-by-mail not only exists in theory; it is rampant in the real world. We don't have to look far for examples. *In just the last few weeks* a number of people have been charged with election fraud in conjunction with mail-in voting. In West Virginia, it was a mail carrier who changed absentee ballots from Democrat to Republican. In Paterson NJ, county election officials had to toss nearly 20% of the ballots presented – 20%! – because four men, including the City Council Vice President, altered ballots from Republican to Democrat or falsely filled in ballots for Democrat candidates.

Here are but a few of the reasons why Connecticut should not permit vote by mail:

- 1) **Invisible:** By its very nature, fraud is difficult to prevent and detect. It's not a public, brazen act. It is conducted in secret and impossible to detect when it is happening.
- 2) **Difficult to detect:** With a few absentee ballots to check it's easier for election officials to verify addresses and signatures (even then, there are examples in every election cycle of absentee fraud). With hundreds of thousands of votes there is simply no way for officials to verify every ballot.
- 3) **Easy to do:** This fraud does not require any particular skill. It's not difficult to collect ballots from nursing homes, apartment buildings, and even from mailboxes. Even mail carriers have gotten into the act (see the example from WV, above).
- 4) **Scalable:** In-person fraud is difficult as it requires someone to show up in person. It requires a warm body for every act of fraud. Mail fraud is infinitely more scalable – those four men in NJ managed to fraudulently alter more than three thousand ballots.
- 5) **It harms legitimate voters:** Every fraudulent vote that is cast dilutes the legitimate vote of an actual person, disenfranchising that voter. When single precincts in NYC cast more votes than there are residents, as they did in 2008 and 2012, those voters are completely kicked to the curb.
- 6) **Cure may be worse than the disease:** Assuming the state did try to do something to weed out the fraudulent ballots, there is an excellent chance that legitimate votes will also be tossed in the attempt to cull the wheat from the chaff, again disenfranchising Connecticut voters.

Americans have voted in person for more than 200 years. Now is not the time to take away the power of the ballot box from the citizens of this state and hand it over to a well-oiled syndicate that is ready, willing, and quite able to commit voter fraud on a massive scale. Let's not be a party to their illegal actions. If thousands of people can safely march in the streets, there is absolutely no reason why they cannot safely march to the polls on Election Day.

Sincerely,

*Eric S. Belk*