

Normally, I don't think we should be spending a lot of taxpayer money on mailings to constituents, be those mailings "updates" from legislators or ballots. But this year is not normal, and I know that doesn't come as a surprise. This year those of us who are being responsible are staying safe by staying isolated. Those of us who are responsible are keeping other people safe by staying isolated. And I'll bet that many of those who are being responsible about Covid also tend to be responsible about other things, including taking care of our democracy by voting.

Normally, going to the polls to vote is a treat. It's exciting and feels good to see your neighbors exercising their rights to vote.

But, again, this year is not normal. This year, voting in person is a serious health threat to ourselves and to others. And, the threat is also an economic one. If Covid spreads, our economy suffers.

So, this year, it is crucial that we do whatever is necessary to permit no-excuse absentee balloting in Connecticut. Or, failing that, permit the health crisis of Covid-19 serve as an acceptable reason for getting an absentee ballot. That small change will be good for our democracy, our health, and the economy. In this time of "we can't do this and we can't do that," let's not add voting to the things we can't do!

Additionally, this year we should send absentee ballot applications to every registered voter in Connecticut for the general election. While some of us have Internet access and computers and printers, many of the most vulnerable people don't. I'm thinking of my elderly mom and her cohort. None of them have the Internet, computers or printers. Nor are they going shopping or to the post office for stamps. They're certainly not going to the polls to vote as they normally would. It's too dangerous. And if we get a vaccine by the end of the year, it still won't be in time for November's election.

So, while we might want to have a longer debate about how we might reform voting procedures in Connecticut for the long term, there's no time for that longer debate now. Please immediately make everyone who loves democracy happy by making it clear that Connecticut will institute no-excuse or Covid-excuse absentee voting this year and will send applications for such ballots to all registered voters this year.

Thank you.

Harvey Jassem, Canton, CT