

## **SUPPORT – Bill No. 3576**

Government Administration and Elections Committee July 21, 2020

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My name is John McNamara and I'm from New Britain. I thank the Chairs and members for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

I urge the Government Administration and Elections Committee to act favorably on Bill No 3576 allowing voting by mail to any citizen requesting an absentee ballot for the November 3<sup>rd</sup> general election. The current law that allows absentee voting for persons who are out of town, serving in the military and other reasons, which have been added to the statute through the years, needs a 2020 amendment to open absentee voting to every citizen who wants it because every citizen faces health risks with exposure to COVID-19. As Secretary of the State Denise Merrill and others have said voters should not have to choose between their health and their franchise during this pandemic.

I speak to you as a member of the New Britain Democratic Town Committee which in April unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Governor and General Assembly to extend mail-in voting privileges to all registered voters this year. The GAE committee should use the COVID-19 amendment as a springboard to statutory and constitutional changes to make no-excuse absentee voting and early in person voting permanent for all future primaries and elections.

The Lamont Administration and the General Assembly should also make provision for additional funding to ensure a smooth and safe election, especially if the Congress and federal government fails to provide new CARES Act funds for election security and absentee voting. Current federal funds for this purpose are inadequate and we are less than four months away from Election Day.

Thank you.