

To: Connecticut General Assembly

Fr: Linda Zukauskas, Woodbury, Connecticut

Re: LCO No. 3576 AAC Absentee Voting at the 2020 State Election and Election Day Registration

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As a newspaper reporter, I have shared instructions on how to use absentee ballots with readers for more than decade. I trust the absentee ballot process in our state. I am familiar with the reasons for using such a ballot and believe that language in our laws should not restrict use of absentee ballots if someone would like to use this method to vote during the pandemic.

Allowing absentee ballots would literally save lives. Voters would not be putting themselves and others at risk because the absentee ballots would reduce the numbers of people congregating. The men and women who operate our polling places work very, very long days and I admire their dedication to our democratic process. They, too, should be protected and reducing the number of people appearing in person at polls would be a way to honor their commitment as a vital part of our election process.

We will likely lose many of these polling place workers because a significant number are in the high risk group. It's therefore likely that our polling places will be limited in scope, thereby increasing the stress on those that remain open. Absentee ballots could relieve that pressure.

As one of the current uses of absentee ballots is medically-oriented, it seems a logical extension to encompass the pandemic in that definition.

Thank you for listening to my request to ensure that those who have been or might be infected by the coronavirus can have the option to vote remotely as to either deny them the right to vote is wrong as is the idea that that anyone would force fellow Americans to help this horrible virus to spread when we have a simple and reliable method to do what we always do each November—vote.