

AN ACT Concerning absentee voting at the 2020 state election and election day registration

My name is Lisa Lucarelli Chandler, I submit my testimony today as a grandmother, mom, wife and citizen of CT. I am in support of Bill No. LCO No 3576, specifically to allow voters to use COVID as an acceptable excuse to vote absentee, i.e. (7) for the state election in 2020, the sickness of COVID-19. As used in this section, "COVID-19" means the respiratory disease designated by the World Health Organization on February 11, 2020, as coronavirus 2019, and any related mutation thereof recognized by said organization as a communicable respiratory disease.

This is a historic time in CT and our nation. I thank the legislators who have worked diligently to put the safety of CT citizens first and to bring this legislation to the floor. We are all aware of the ruthlessness of COVID and the latest understanding in our scientific community by which it is transmitted. As such, I will not address that in my statement; only to say that a rational person may see their local polling place as unsafe and high risk for their family. We should not have to choose between our right to vote and our health and safety.

If you recall in 2018, there was a large voter turnout, Urban areas were especially affected with long lines, confusion and wait times. My daughter was one of those frustrated voters. Two years later and we add a virulent, repertory virus to the situation. November 3rd is one of the most important elections of our lifetimes. Families around the state are concerned and stressed about how to make the safest and best practical decisions for their families. Safe access to casting a ballot should not be one of them.

As a matter of practicality without a change in this statute, many families may have to choose between taking their children to the polls or not voting. COVID has had a direct impact on child care accessibility. Grandparents, such as myself, are in a high-risk group; we must limit our interaction with our grandchildren if social distancing protocols are not adhered to. Not having access to an absentee ballot impacts all the members of my family and families around the state.

I remember my mother taking me to the polls when I was four years old. The same age as my granddaughter is now. It impressed me to this day the importance she placed on casting her ballot. This year it is time to offer every voter the option to vote absentee if that is right for their family circumstances. Parents can still teach their children about good voting habits and citizenship –not at the polls – but around the kitchen table.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Lucarelli Chandler (She/Her)