

Honorable Members of the GAE Committee:
This written testimony is in support of
proposed legislation LCO 3576 AAC Absentee Ballot
Voting.

- **I urge you to enact legislation to expand absentee ballot voting in the 2020 general election in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **Changes to the CT statute should allow all eligible CT voters to vote lawfully with absentee ballots because of illness from Covid-19.**
- **Voters should not have to risk illness or death to exercise their right to vote. It is the responsibility of elected officials to take appropriate action during a pandemic to protect their constituents. To fail to do so is a failure in leadership.**
- **Changes in the CT statute should ensure absentee ballot voting in a secure and orderly manner to protect the voter as well as their vote.**
- **Changes in the CT statute should allow voters to register and vote on election day at more than one polling place per town.**
- **Changes in the CT statute must ensure that all voters in line by 8 pm are permitted to register and cast their vote.**
- **Changes in the CT statute must be brought in line with the CT State Constitution and should allow all eligible voters to get absentee ballots beyond the November election.**
- **Removal of the words "such electors or person's" from the draft bill regarding absentee ballot voting**

will ensure safe voting rights as long as the pandemic persists, including any possible special elections in 2021. In so doing, legislators would not have to call another special session to protect voter rights.

We applaud **State Representative Christine Palm** for her outstanding leadership in helping to craft this bill. We also commend **Secretary of the State Denise Merrill** for her remarkable courage. Her decision to send out absentee ballot applications to all eligible voters in CT during the pandemic, despite political opposition, demonstrated her commitment to democracy and her determination to protect the right to vote. A note of gratitude also goes out to **Attorney General William Tong** who defended the State of Connecticut and the right of the Secretary of State to send out absentee ballot applications. The State of Connecticut succeeded in getting Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard Robinson to dismiss a lawsuit by Republican plaintiffs that challenged that decision. This is the kind of leadership that inspires the support of dedicated volunteers across our state!

Thank you once again for supporting the efforts of DWA, Safe Vote CT, and Voter Choice CT to secure safe voting with absentee ballots. With expanded access to absentee ballots all voters can vote *lawfully* in the 2020 election.

Maria Segarra Martinez