

To: Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

Listening Session Re: LCO-3576

Absentee Ballots

Every citizen has the right, under the law, to vote privately and independently. The way the CT Absentee Ballot is currently structured, that right is denied to a large group of citizens. People with a print disability have been told that we should just get someone to mark our ballots for us. We have been told that it would be easier – for whom?

Other states have found solutions to this problem without electronic voting. Those solutions have been offered freely to the State of Connecticut.

In pursuit of this issue, I have not been given a valid reason why such existing systems and ballots cannot be adopted by the State of Connecticut. Electronic delivery of the ballot is not electronic voting! I appreciate the resistance to online voting, but these systems do not require online voting. The actual voting is done by mail.

How would you feel if you or your daughter or your son was told that they would not be able to vote because they could not mark a piece of paper to vote like any other citizen who is eligible to vote? Or – to be told that someone else could mark your ballot for you?

In the past, I have been told all of these things! First comes the hurt and disappointment that I was seen as less than a full person. Then came the anger that my civil rights were being denied all because I had requested an accommodation. At the polls now, we can vote by special telephone or with a touch screen, depending on our special needs.

In the past, I have been told that the equipment hasn't been set up and to wait in the corner or that my partner or the moderator can fill out the ballot for me. Here we are – again! I can either risk my health and vote in person at the polls, get someone else to fill out the ballot for me or just not vote because there is no system of accommodation. Thirty years of having the ADA to protect my rights is too important to me to **“not vote”**!

Thank you,

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