



**Government Administration and Elections Committee**

**July 21, 2020**

**Listening Session on Draft LCO No. 3576**

**An Act Concerning Absentee Voting at the 2020 State Election and Election Day  
Registration**

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson, and I am the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of workers employed in the private and public sectors, as well as over 10,000 retirees currently living in Connecticut. On behalf of our members, I offer the following testimony in support of LCO No. 3576: An Act Concerning Absentee Voting at the 2020 State Election and Election Day Registration.

As Connecticut residents, we have all had to live through some of the most trying times of our lives. These past several months have required us to think differently, act differently, and work differently. In order to ensure that we are keeping ourselves, our family, our loved ones, our co-workers, and our fellow residents safe and healthy, we are socially distancing, washing our hands regularly, and wearing a face covering when we leave our homes.

Soon, many of us will do something else a little differently: vote in the August 11 Primary Election by mail. However, because Connecticut has some of the most restrictive vote by mail rules in the country, unless the General Assembly takes action, too many people will be forced to choose between exercising their right to vote and protecting their health when November 3 arrives.

Connecticut trails the nation in allowing voters to vote by mail without an excuse. This has always been a problem, now, more so than ever. Voting is the lifeblood of our representative democracy. Peaceful elections have long been a source of pride, and they should never be an avenue for fear.

The bill before you will allow a one-time COVID-19 excuse to vote absentee for the 2020 General Election. Unfortunately, after the next General Election, the draft bill would still place residents of Connecticut at risk by only allowing voters to use an absentee ballot because of "such elector's or person's illness."

We urge you to remove these four words -- “such elector’s or person’s” -- from the draft bill regarding absentee ballot voting. This will ensure that as long as the pandemic remains a threat, eligible Connecticut voters will have the ability to choose to vote by mail – including in any possible special elections early in 2021.

Thankfully, for the Primary Election on August 11, we will not have to choose between our safety and exercising one of our most precious rights. This year, I will be voting by mail, and I encourage others to do the same. Let’s make sure we can also do this for the November General Election, and beyond.

Stephen Anderson  
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001