

Hello Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

My name is Takina Pollock and I am a resident of Bridgeport, CT. Thank you for your leadership on LCO 3576, a bill that would allow Connecticut voters to claim "fear of illness from COVID-19" as a reason to request an Absentee Ballot for November's general election. I strongly support this bill because we shouldn't have to choose between our health and exercising our right to vote.

But, the people of Bridgeport still need your help! We need to feel confident that the absentee ballot voting process is a fair one. Yet, the voters of Bridgeport have for generations suffered under absentee ballot abuse. Already, political operatives in Bridgeport have taken out over 1,000 absentee ballot applications from the Town Clerk's office. These operatives target and manipulate our youth, elderly, disabled, low-income, and Spanish-speaking residents, all for the purpose of controlling the outcome of our local elections.

From evidence presented during the 2019 trial ["Lazar v. Ganim,"](#) we know they lie to voters. We know they forge applications and signatures. We know they take voter's ballots. We know the Town Clerk and Registrar's offices are overwhelmed during a regular election cycle. We know partisan players here in Bridgeport rig elections to maintain political power.

According to Civil Rights historian, Dr. Mary Frances Berry, "vote buying, misuse of absentee ballots, and other stratagems tends to defraud the very citizens who need government services the most: the poor, the elderly, and minority voters." **Bridgeport needs an Election Monitor to be included in this bill!** Last year, Bridgeport Generation Now delivered over 3,000 petition signatures to the Secretary of the State calling for oversight of our local elections.

***Now, over 770 people signed our new petition, asking for an Election Monitor to be placed in Bridgeport for two years. Please make this a priority issue for the Special Session, as part of your work on LCO 3576. Federal funding was made available to the Secretary of the State and should be used for this purpose.***

I know you believe strongly in democracy, voting rights, civil rights, and fair elections. Enough is enough, let's restore democracy to Bridgeport and end absentee ballot abuse once and for all.

Thank you,

Takina Pollock