



Testimony in Support of LCO No. 3576

***AN ACT CONCERNING ABSENTEE VOTING AT THE 2020 STATE ELECTION AND
ELECTION DAY REGISTRATION.***

7/21/2020

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Flexer, Rep. Fox, and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee

From: Alexander Rodriguez, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Dear Honorable Chairs Sen. Flexer, Rep. Fox, and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

On behalf of the CT League of Conservation Voters, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of ***LCO No. 3576 AAC Absentee Voting at the 2020 State Election and Election Day.***

At the CT League of Conservation Voters, we traditionally promote strong, equitable environmental policy to ensure protection of our natural resources and the public health of CT residents.

No one said it better than Secretary Denise Merrill when she said no voter should choose between their health and their vote. The COVID-19 pandemic has further aggravated the environmental and health conditions impacting marginalized communities in Connecticut and across the nation. That is why we have joined voting rights organizations in support of the expansion of absentee voting to protect our health and strengthen our democracy.

CT League of Conservation Voters supports an amended *LCO No. 3576 AAC Absentee Voting* at the 2020 State Election and Election Day with the following recommendations:

- Align state statute with the state constitution to ensure voting rights are secured. Future legislatures should not have to continue to come back in for special sessions to protect voting rights.
- While adding a one-time COVID-19 excuse to vote absentee (ONLY) for the 2020 general election, the draft bill still restricts voting rights beyond the language of Connecticut's state constitution. Voting by absentee ballot must be guaranteed for the November elections and onward in Connecticut.
- Beyond the November general election, the draft bill would allow voters to get absentee ballots because of "such elector's or person's illness." If we remove these four words -- "such elector's or person's" - - from the draft bill regarding absentee ballot voting, it will ensure that as long as the pandemic remains in America eligible Connecticut voters will have access to voting rights – including any possible special elections early in 2021.

We urge the Committee to support an amended *LCO No. 3576 AAC Absentee Voting* with the recommendations mentioned above to ensure a strong democracy and a healthy Connecticut.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexander Rodriguez

Community Organizer

CTLCV