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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Josh Elliott

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ON EXPANDED VOTING FOR HAMDEN RESIDENTS

FROM YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Josh Elliott

88th House District

Dear Neighbor,

In 2020 we saw the vital role elections play in our democracy and how we are able to make progress through voting. On the contrary, this year we have also seen blatant attacks on the voting rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

This session, Connecticut has the opportunity to lead the charge in protecting the voting rights of all of its voters with a number of proposed bills related to voter expansion. One of my priorities was to establish a task force to study the implementation of a ranked choice voting system in Connecticut. Unfortunately, this proposal did not have enough support to make it through the legislative process this year, but I promise to advocate for this proposal again during the next legislative session. I am committed to championing legislation that will fight for equitable accessibility to voting throughout our state.

As we continue the legislative process in hearing these bills, I am interested in hearing your views on these vital matters. Please email me with any questions, suggestions or comments you would like to share.

Stay safe and be well.

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CREATING A CONNECTICUT VOTING RIGHTS ACT

The Federal Voting Rights Act has been losing its power to protect the voting rights of racial and ethnic minorities for years, as some states enact policies that make it disproportionately harder for members of these groups to vote. Connecticut can send a message to the rest of the nation by protecting voting rights of all its voters by passing this bill. Voters should choose their elected officials, elected officials shouldn't choose their voters.

NO-EXCUSE ABSENTEE VOTING

We have proposed a constitutional amendment that would permit "No-Excuse" absentee voting. Connecticut's Constitution currently only allows voters to vote absentee if they are absent from town on election day, are unable to vote due to sickness or physical disability, or their religion forbids secular activity on election day. This proposal requires passage in the house and senate, and then needs to be voted on by the public. Currently, 34 states and the District of Columbia provide "No-Excuse" absentee voting.

EARLY VOTING

This proposal creates a constitutional amendment that would permit in-person early voting in state and local elections. If Election Day is the only day in which voters can vote, they must balance work obligations, childcare, and other responsibilities that can deter them from voting. Allowing early voting will provide everyone more opportunities to exercise their right to vote. This resolution follows the same process as "No-Excuse" Absentee Voting. Currently, 43 states plus the District of Columbia offer some form of early voting.

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ADDRESSING THE COST OF PHONE CALLS FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS

This legislation, if enacted, will provide all voice communication for incarcerated people at correctional facilities at no cost to the person placing or receiving the call. Services included are telephone, email and video calls. Connecticut currently has one of the highest costs in the nation for phone calls, at nearly \$5.00 for a 15-minute call, which creates an inequitable cost barrier for families to remain in touch. This decline in communication with family members makes it challenging for incarcerated people to acclimate back into their communities when their terms are up. The State should support families and communities affected by the prison pipeline and make their reentry into society easier, not harder.



Learn about local events, happenings at the Capitol, and updates on COVID-19 and vaccinations by signing up for email updates at: www.housedems.ct.gov/Elliott