



**Testimony in Support of House Joint Resolution No. 59: A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting**

**Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut  
February 22, 2021**

Thank you, chairs and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of House Joint Resolution No. 59: A Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow for Early Voting.

Connecticut is one of only seven states that does not allow early voting.<sup>i</sup> This restriction is an accessibility issue. Currently, Connecticut voters must be able to vote on a specific day, which is an impossibility for many working adults. Working-class Americans, among whom Black Americans are overrepresented, may frequently be unable to take time off work on a Tuesday to vote. Early voting can reduce lines on Election Day and increases voter access.<sup>ii</sup>

People of color are overrepresented among early voters. For the 2020 general election, 66% of Black voters and 61% of Hispanic/Latino voters planned to vote early, compared to 55% of white voters. This pattern was also true for in person early voting, with 33% of Black voters and 25% of Hispanic/Latino voters planning to vote early, compared to 20% of white voters.<sup>iii</sup>

In Florida in both 2008 and 2012, Black Americans comprised 20% of the electorate on each day of early voting, despite only making up about 14% of Floridan voters.<sup>iv</sup> Hispanic voters were overrepresented on weekend early voting days.<sup>iv</sup> Abolishing early voting days is used as a move to disenfranchise Black voters, which courts have agreed on in multiple cases.<sup>v</sup> <sup>vi</sup> Connecticut's restrictive voting laws likely have an inequitable impact on people of color and working-class voters.

A majority of Connecticut voters, 79%, favor early voting. Early voting also has bipartisan support: 69% of Republicans, 86% of Democrats, and 79% of unaffiliated voters favor early voting.<sup>i</sup> The people of Connecticut have the right to vote on this issue to ensure all citizens have the right to vote, including those who cannot take off work on a Tuesday to vote.

Currently, 43 states and Washington D.C. offer early voting and Delaware will enact this option in 2022. Of these states, 24 plus Washington D.C. allow some weekend voting.<sup>vii</sup> Connecticut's residents have the right to early voting. Early voting creates more flexibility for workers who may not be able to vote on a specific Tuesday and improves voting equity. We urge you to support this resolution. Thank you.

*Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut's mission is to serve as a catalyst that engages residents and communities in shaping a democratic health system that provides universal access to quality, affordable, equitable health care and promotes health in Connecticut. We believe that health care is a fundamental right and that our work is part of a broader movement for social and economic justice.*

---

<sup>i</sup> Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill. (2021, January 28). *Poll of Connecticut voters shows broad, bipartisan support for early voting; expanding access to absentee ballots; common-sense voting reforms* [Press Release]. <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Press-Releases/2021-Press-Releases/Poll-of-Connecticut-Voters-Shows-Broad>

<sup>ii</sup> Graham, D. A. (2016, August 18). *Have North Carolina Republicans found a way to reinstate discriminatory voting rules?* The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/08/north-carolina-voting/496415/>

<sup>iii</sup> Skelly, G. (2020, September 21). *A record number of Black Americans could vote early this year.* FiveThirtyEight. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/a-record-number-of-black-americans-could-vote-early-this-year/>

<sup>iv</sup> Herron, M. C. & Smith, D. A. (2014). Race, party, and the consequences of restricting early voting in Florida in the 2012 general election. *Political Research Quarterly*, 67(3), 646-665. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912914524831>

<sup>v</sup> Rice-Johnson, P. (2016, November 5). *A step in the wrong direction: Cutting early voting days hurts voters.* Brennan Center for Justice. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/step-wrong-direction-cutting-early-voting-hurts-voters>

<sup>vi</sup> Graham, D. A. (2016, July 29). *North Carolina's deliberate disenfranchisement of Black voters.* The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/north-carolina-voting-rights-law/493649/>

<sup>vii</sup> National Conference of State Legislators. (2020, October 22). *State laws governing early voting.* <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/early-voting-in-state-elections.aspx>