



**Testimony in Support of S.B. 184: An Act Extending Through November 8, 2022,  
Several Changes Regarding Election Administration As A Result of Covid-19 And  
Concerning Eligibility To Vote by Absentee Ballot**

**and**

**H.B. 5262: And Act Revising Certain Absentee Voting Eligibility Statutes**

**March 4, 2022**

**Universal Health Care Foundation**

Thank you distinguished chairs and members of the Government Administration and Elections for the opportunity to testify in favor of S.B.184 and H.B. 5262. Universal Healthcare Foundation's mission to accelerate the movement for health justice recognizes that health is a human right fundamentally related and core to social justice and equity. We are strongly in favor of expanding absentee voting eligibility and the passage of S.B. 184 and H.B. 5262.

S.B. and H.B. 5262 propose to extend the provision that allows eligible electors to vote via absentee ballot due to COVID-19 sickness for any election held prior to November 3, 2021, until November 8, 2022. **Extending the eligibility is essential to ensure that all eligible electors, including the elderly, immunocompromised, and caregivers of vulnerable people, have equal access to voting.**

In the 2020 presidential election, it was found that the demographic most likely to use mail-in absentee ballots was the elderly. Among voters aged 65 and older, 55% reported voting using absentee ballots<sup>1</sup>. We are still responding and recovering to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the CDC, older adults are at highest risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, and more than 81% of COVID-19 deaths occur in people over the age of 65.<sup>2</sup> **In-person voting greatly hinders the ability of older adults and their caregivers to vote.**

There is also evidence to suggest that increased access to absentee voting results in increased votes. In an analysis of voting data from 2016 and 2020, it was found that among all residents who were eligible to vote in presidential elections the turnout rate in Connecticut for voters was approximately 3% higher in 2020 than 2016, and nearly 37%

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Research Center. (November 2020). *The Voting Experience of 2020*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2020/11/20/the-voting-experience-in-2020/>

<sup>2</sup> CDC. (February 2022). *People with certain medical conditions*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

of 2020 voters opted to use the absentee ballot<sup>3</sup>. This indicates that a **lack of absentee voting eligibility acts as a barrier for people who would otherwise vote if given the access.**

We urge your support in ensuring that all eligible voters in Connecticut have access to voting by expanding absentee voting eligibility through the passage of S.B. 184 and H.B. 5262. Thank you for your time.

*Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut's mission is to accelerate the movement for health justice for everybody because health is a human right and core to social justice and equity.*

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<sup>3</sup> Pananjady, K. (May 2021). *Does absentee voting increase turnout? There's no easy answer.* CT Mirror. <https://ctmirror.org/2021/05/11/does-absentee-voting-increase-turnout-theres-no-easy-answer/>