

2022 Issue and Legislative Priorities

“My dear friends: Your vote is precious, almost sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have to create a more perfect union.” – **Congressman John Lewis (February 21, 1940—July 17, 2020)**

As states across the country attempt to roll back voting rights and protections, Connecticut must lead the way in protecting and expanding voting freedoms. But as the Center for Public Integrity observed in 2020, Connecticut has among the most restrictive voting laws outside of the south. Black, Brown, and other communities of color in Connecticut routinely face long lines and other obstacles when voting. It’s past time we remove these barriers and ensure that all voters are free from voter suppression and intimidation.

1. Early Voting ([the Nov. 8, 2022 statewide election will include a ballot question where voters will decide if the constitution will be amended to allow Early Voting](#)) to make voting more accessible and strengthen our democracy.

Connecticut is one of only seven states without Early Voting (including states with all-mail elections) and one of only three states whose state constitutions bar it.

Long-distance commuters, workers who may lose wages if they take time off from work, elderly or sick voters and their caregivers and countless others vote early in the thirty-eight states that allow it.

Candidates conduct voter mobilization efforts throughout the Early Voting period, leading to increased voter contact and turnout.

2. Ban Foreign Spending on State Ballot Referendums [to close a huge loophole in state law that currently allows foreign individuals and entities to spend foreign funds to influence the outcome of our state and local ballot referendums.](#)

The question on Connecticut’s November 8, 2022 statewide ballot where voters will decide if our state will finally allow Early Voting could become a target of anti-democratic foreign actors.

The General Assembly needs to enact a specific law to prohibit contributions or expenditures by foreign nationals or entities on ballot measures in Connecticut.

Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 9-620c now sets the following limit: “A political committee formed solely to aid or promote the success or defeat of a referendum question shall not receive contributions from a national committee or from a committee of a candidate for federal or out-of-state office.” But it is silent on funds from foreign sources.

3. [A Connecticut Voting Rights Act](#) to give Black, Brown and other voters of color additional protections against voter suppression.

Connecticut has a record of voter suppression: we were the first state in the country to enact a racially discriminatory literacy test for voting and among the last states in which literacy tests were still in use in the 1950s.

To this day, Black, Brown and other voters of color in Connecticut routinely encounter long lines and other obstacles when voting. In 2020, the Center for Public Integrity observed that Connecticut voters still “face some of the biggest obstacles outside of the south.”

4. A Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) Bill [to create a task force to study the implementation of RCV for state, federal and municipal elections in Connecticut.](#)

In a typical election, voters cast ballots for one candidate, and the candidate with the most votes wins, even if a majority prefer other candidates. In elections with more than two candidates, plurality elections can fail to elect a winner who best represents the majority due to vote splitting, spoiler candidates and wasted votes.

With Ranked Choice Voting, voters rank candidates in the order they prefer them, marking the ballot for their 1st choice, and if they wish, for their 2nd and 3rd choices, and so on. A candidate wins if they receive a majority of first-choice votes, just the same as a plurality election. If no candidate gets more than 50% of first-choice votes, the last-place candidate is eliminated, and the second choices of that candidate’s voters are transferred to the remaining candidates. This process continues until one candidate receives more than 50% of the vote.

By taking into account lower-ranked preferences, RCV gives voters more of a say in who gets elected, even their first choice has little chance of winning.

5. No-Excuse Absentee Voting ([the resolution proposing to amend the state constitution to allow No Excuse Absentee Voting will have to be adopted for a second time by a new legislature during the 2023 legislative session](#)—and then it will be placed on the next statewide ballot after that for voters to reject or approve) to give Connecticut voters the option to vote by absentee ballot (voting by mail or secure ballot drop box) without needing an excuse.

Absentee ballots are safe, cost effective, efficient and secure. 73% of Connecticut voters support No-Excuse Absentee Voting. Thirty-four states offer voting by mail including the states with all-mail elections.

Connecticut's record breaking 80% voter turnout in the 2020 General Election despite the pandemic was thanks in large part to temporarily expanded absentee ballot voting.

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**IN THE FUTURE
FOR OUR FAMILIES
AND COMMUNITIES**

Support 2022 Connecticut
Voting Freedoms

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