



**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATOR LEONARD A. FASANO**  
**SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER**

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October 15, 2020

Denise Merrill  
Secretary of the State  
165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

If you believe all votes matter and voters always need to come first, I am perplexed by your office's disappointing response to absentee ballot issues that have arisen over the last week in at least three towns. You are the constitutional officer elected to ensure each and every vote is protected. Yet when problems appear in a system you created, your first instinct is to blame others instead of offering a helping hand.

Both Republicans and Democrats supported allowing all voters access to absentee ballots this year, but we also demanded a process that protected every vote, and you assured the public that you would meet that responsibility. Then you asked the towns to take on an enormous task. When you moved forward with your mailing of applications to all residents, I expressed my concerns that you were setting up towns to be blamed if anything at all went wrong with the system you pushed them into and created of your own volition. Today we see that is exactly what you are already doing.

Your office blamed these issues on both Wallingford and Vernon, accusing Vernon town hall of "incompetence" and thereby sowing seeds of doubt in the public that local town clerks could not be trusted with the sanctity of the state's voting system. That is inexcusable behavior from the individual who ultimately is responsible for our entire election system and ensuring all town clerks and all election officials at every level of the process have every tool, guidance and assistance they need to manage voting.

Connecticut is obviously working within a new voting system and more problems may likely arise in the coming weeks. If and when they do, I ask that you reflect on the fact that you are ultimately responsible for protecting every vote. Pointing fingers instead of being transparent and assuring our towns and the public that you are a partner in helping correct these issues only further hurts our election system and damages public trust.

You have the resources and the power to fix an issue, and that is what you should be focused on. Every vote must be protected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Len Fasano", written in a cursive style.

Len Fasano  
Senate Republican Leader