



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE CAPITOL
300 CAPITOL AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

July 14, 2022

The Honorable Mark Kohler
Secretary of the State
Via electronic mail

cc. The Honorable Ned Lamont, Governor
cc. Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff

Dear Secretary Kohler:

We are writing to you today to obtain clarity on your office's recent email to town clerks and registrars informing them that supervised absentee balloting (which occurs in nursing home facilities) will be suspended for the August primary elections. It reads in part:

As you may be aware, the Governor has recently continued the Public Health Emergency because of COVID. As such, pursuant to CGS Section 9-159q below, our office will suspend supervised absentee ballot voting for the August 9, 2022 primary. As such, all town clerks should prepare and provide absentee ballots by mail to any individual in a residence that would have been covered by supervised absentee balloting for the August 9, 2022 primary.

As ranking members of the legislature's Government Administration and Elections Committee ("the Committee"), we find your unilateral action extremely troubling. First, the Secretary of the State's office failed to notify the Committee of this action as per *Conn. Gen. Stat. Sec. 9-159q*. Second, it directly conflicts with Governor Lamont's public justification for again extending the state's public health emergency on June 28, 2022. Finally, you are suspending rules related to voting access in our state using the public health emergency declaration that the Governor installed without input or consultation from the legislature. These are practices and safeguards otherwise regulated by our constitution.

Therefore, we are requesting detailed information regarding:

- Why the Secretary of the State's office failed to file a report with the Government Administration and Elections Committee advising of the suspension of supervised balloting and specifying alternative actions to be taken to provide opportunities for absentee voting by electors as required by law;
- An outline of the alternative actions to be taken to provide opportunities for absentee voting by electors described in sections 9-159q and 9-159r of the Connecticut General Statutes;
- Your plan to maintain security and integrity of the balloting process in light of these changes;
- All instructions issued to town clerks and registrars of voters relating to the procedures for absentee voting as a result of the suspension of supervised balloting;
- Any and all communication between your office and the Office of the Governor regarding the recent public health emergency;

- A copy of any meeting invitations, agendas, minutes, or other documents or communication related to meetings between the Secretary of the State's office and groups of registrars of voters and town clerks.

For the sake of clarity, please consider this a request pursuant to our Freedom of Information Laws, *Conn. Gen. Stat. Sections 1-200, et seq.* Thank you and we look forward to your response as we seek to maintain the public's confidence in open and fair August primaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sen. Rob Sampson
16th District

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gale Mastrofrancesco", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rep. Gale Mastrofrancesco
80th District