

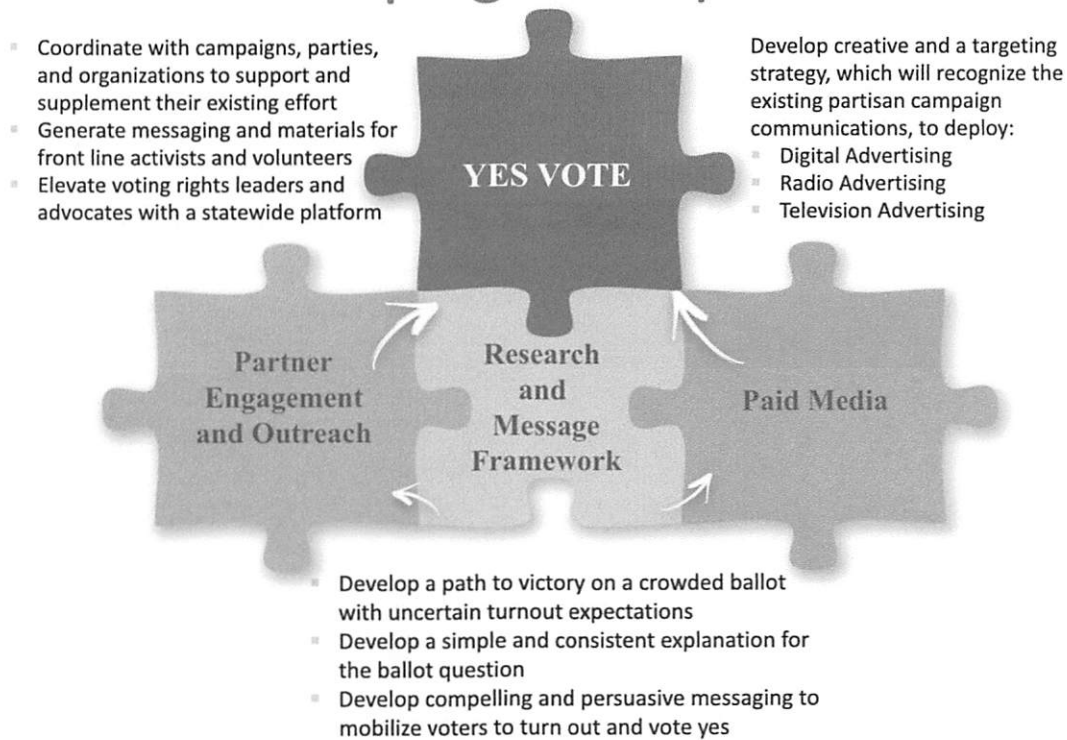
## YES for Freedom to Vote Early – Connecticut Statewide 2022 Referendum Campaign

In November 2022, Connecticut voters will be asked to approve a ballot question to support amending the state constitution to provide for early voting. Connecticut is left behind as it relates to voting rights as one of only six states and territories that doesn't permit early voting. The stakes of this campaign are high.

In recent years, we have seen increased momentum on state and national levels surrounding the importance of expanded voting access. But after a failed effort to pass a referendum in 2014, Connecticut has fallen behind. Under Secretary of the State Denise Merrill's leadership, Connecticut voters will again have the opportunity to pass early voting into law. While we have seen neighboring states stopped by well-funded opposition, including a failed effort to expand voting rights in New York in 2021, we have a chance to take a critical step in securing this fundamental right to vote.

The referendum campaign committee is crucial to convene a table for partners and advocates to coalesce around a winning strategy and deploy tactics only available to a well-funded statewide campaign to ensure a YES vote in November 2022 and create an infrastructure that will provide the necessary research, education, and paid media to be successful in this electoral environment.

### Campaign Components

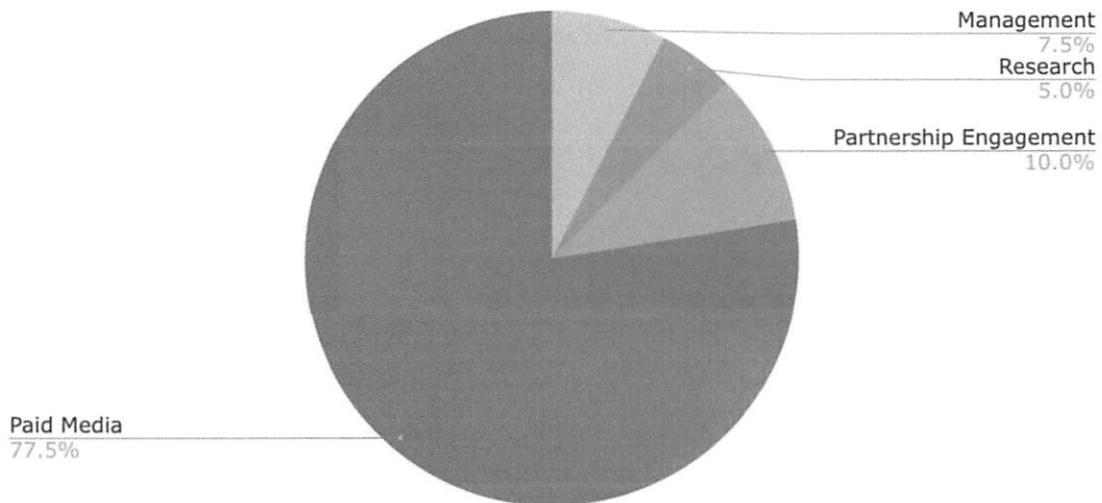


**YES for Freedom to Vote Early** is being organized as **Referendum Committee** under the regulations of the **Connecticut State Elections Enforcement Commission**.

- Business entities and organizations may contribute up to **\$360,594.40** to a referendum committee (CGS § 9-620).
- Individuals and other political committees (registered in CT) may make **unlimited** contributions to referendum committees. Id. and CGS § 9-612(d).
- Contributions may **not** be received by a federal campaign committee or leadership PAC (CGS § 9-620(b))

*Contributions can be made to "Yes for Freedom to Vote Early," and sent to CT Compliance and Law Services, PO Box 130, Guilford, CT 06437*

Campaign Budget



#### Campaign Components

- **Management**
  - **Management:** Coordinate campaign leadership, engage political and advocacy partners for political and earned media purposes, manage consulting team
  - **Fundraising:** Engage major institutional donors as primary universe and then supplement with additional in-state major donors (which will also serve as an organizing tactic)
  - **Legal/Compliance:** Provide legal guidance for referendum committee and key leaders, coordinate with State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) on any regulatory matters
- **Research:** Test voter sentiment, target universe, key messaging
- **Partner Engagement:** Support and educate labor leaders, local Democratic and Republican leaders, faith leaders, and advocacy groups in Connecticut to empower leaders and volunteers
- **Media**
  - **Influencer/Reactive Earned Media:** Deploy surrogates where appropriate, respond to media requests (including editorial boards), and shape coverage/mentions of early vote referendum
  - **Paid Media:** Digital Advertising, Direct Mail, Radio, and Television
    - Includes production of up to three sets of creative for any medium

**Language on the 2022 Connecticut ballot, statewide:**

*Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly to provide for early voting?*

**Constitutional Changes:**

The measure would amend Articles VI, III, and IV of the state constitution.

Article III would be amended as follows:

*At all elections for members of the general assembly the presiding officers in the several towns shall ~~receive the votes of the electors, and~~ count and declare ~~them~~ the votes of the electors in open meeting. The presiding officers shall make and certify duplicate lists of the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each. One list shall be delivered within three days to the town clerk, and within ten days after such meeting, the other shall be delivered ~~under seal~~ to the secretary of the state.*

Article IV would be amended as follows:

*~~At the meetings of the electors in the respective towns held quadrennially as herein provided for the election of state officers, the presiding officers shall receive the votes and shall count and declare the same in the presence of the electors. The votes at the election of state officers shall be counted and declared in open meeting by the presiding officers in the several towns. The presiding officers shall make and certify duplicate lists of the persons voted for, and of the number of votes for each. One list shall be delivered within three days to the town clerk, and within ten days after such meeting, the other shall be delivered under seal to the secretary of the state.~~*

Article VI would be amended to include the following language:

*The general assembly may further provide by law for voting in person prior to the day of election in the choice of any officer to be elected or upon any question to be voted on at an election by qualified voters of the state.*

## **Prospective Impact:**

- **Voter turnout increases because of flexibility, convenience, and broader access**
  - See 2018 report on all-mail ballot elections in Utah and 2013 Brennan Center report on early in-person voting
  - According to the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, between the 2004 and 2008 presidential elections, early in-person voting increased one-third, to 13% of all votes cast nationally— a survey of voters nationwide report an even higher rate of usage in 2008 and again in 2012, 18 percent.
- **Voters prefer voting early over voting on Election Day**
  - More than one-third of voters – over 46 million people nationwide – voted early in 2016.
  - In the 2018 midterms, almost 40 million people nationwide early voted, a significant jump from 2014.
  - In 2020, when many states that did not previously have early voting or no excuse absentee ballots instituted such measures, voters voted early in record numbers: 100 million people — representing more than two thirds of the total votes cast — early voted
  - In 2020 in Connecticut, more than 1.8 million people – a record number – cast ballots and more than 650,000 of them chose to vote by absentee ballot – 35% of total votes cast.
- **Reduces long lines and delays**
  - Connecticut experienced significant delays and long lines on Election Day in 2018. This would have been eased by giving voters the flexibility to cast their ballots in advance, evidenced by the growth in early voting nationwide from about 10% of voters in the 1990s to more than one-third today.
- **Strong public support, but a challenge to win a YES vote**
  - According to data released by the Connecticut Secretary of State's office 79% of Connecticut voters support Early Voting and 73% of Connecticut voters support expanding access to absentee ballots to all voters without requiring an excuse.
  - However, recent June 2022 polling on the specific ballot question to amend the Connecticut Constitution and allow the General Assembly to pass Early Voting legislation only commands 54% support
  - The polling data shows the YES campaign is winnable with an organized and well-resourced campaign, however if anti-early voting NO messaging takes hold, the YES vote can be reduced to under 50%