

Jill Cataldi

From: Jordan Goyette <goyettejordan@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 9:09 PM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Subject: testimony in opposition to H 6622

Dear Chairman Shanley & members of the committee,

While I can appreciate the committee and Vice Chair Corvese's interest in reforming our electoral system in Rhode Island, I am afraid moving towards the type of often called "jungle primary" this bill purports to create is moving in the wrong direction. In states like California this system often results in candidates from each party being essentially "locked out" of the general election they are running to compete in. In just the last election cycle in California, Republicans there won a Democratic-held seat being vacated by its incumbent. 4 Democratic candidates ran in the primary general election, while 2 Republicans did on the GOP side. Ultimately, the two Republican candidates took the top 2 spots, and the Democratic party lost a seat by default. This again happened vice versa to Republicans in a similar situation the cycle before (2018), and the party lost a long-held seat before they could even fight to keep it in November. Take the fact that many candidates often run in Rhode Island without a party label, and its likely that this only reduces the low amount of general election competition we see in races here. As a caveat, this is actually a system more fitting for actual party primaries, known as the instant run-off system that is done in Texas and North Carolina among others, where the top-two candidates in a primary race advance to a later run-off if no one takes a 50%+1 majority. Due to the fact that many races here are essentially decided in primaries, and we just had a Special State Senate race last fall that resulted in the winning candidate advancing with just 31% of the vote, it shouldn't be seen as an idea that isn't worth exploring. For now I would urge that you not adopt this change as is.

Thank You,

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