

Written Testimony in Support of House Bill No. 5770 titled Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution – of Suffrage

March 14, 2023

Dear Chairperson Shanley and members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections:

I am Logan Danker, a student at Brown University and Co-Executive Director of the Rhode Island nonprofit Time to Run.

We at Time to Run focus our work on empowering people from low-income and historically represented groups to run for office and advocate more effectively in their communities. Being able to vote is one of the most important ways for community members to civically engage and advocate for the changes they want to see in their neighborhoods. Our organization supports House Bill No. 5770 because same day registration is the single best reform to improve our comparatively low turnout in the United States.¹

House Bill No. 5770 is a vital piece of legislation for promoting greater civic engagement in Rhode Island, particularly among younger people and people of color in our state. Same day voting is incredibly helpful to those who move more frequently and haven't updated their registration. Renters and younger folks tend to move more often.² Further, Black, Latino, and low-income households are more likely to rent,³ thus also more likely to move more frequently. In November 2022, 1,746 Rhode Island voters cast provisional ballots because they were not on the voting list at the precinct where they attempted to cast their ballots. Many of these provisional ballots were a result of voters moving without updating their voter registration. Passing this legislation would reduce the number of provisional ballots cast and make voting more accessible to renters and younger communities.

Finally, our organization firmly believes House Bill No. 5770 will be a critical step toward a more inclusive democracy. Numerous studies suggest that same day registration is the most effective pro-voter reform in encouraging participation among historically low-turnout groups like, young, low-income, Latinx, and African American voters.⁴

As a low-income student and community leader dedicated toward fostering greater participation and civic engagement from voters, I support House Bill No. 5770.

We at Time to Run urge you to vote in favor of House Bill No. 5770, titled Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution – of Suffrage.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill No. 5770.

Sincerely,

Logan A. Danker
69 Brown Street Box 2104, Providence, Rhode Island 02912
Student and Community Leader in House District 1

¹ <https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/election-day-registration-and-the-limits-of-litigation>

² <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/migration/guidance/calculating-migration-expectancy.html>

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/08/02/as-national-eviction-ban-expires-a-look-at-who-rents-and-who-owns-in-the-u-s/>

⁴ <https://www.demos.org/policy-briefs/same-day-registration-how-registration-reform-can-boost-turnout-among-black-and>