

Dear Honorable Members of the State Government and Elections Committee:

This past year, I've spoken with hundreds of Rhode Islanders about ranked choice voting.

Almost every interaction ends with the same question: "What do we need to do to get this in Rhode Island?" I hear people who want to opt in to making the process better and not opt out by sitting it out. That is very encouraging.

I hear two reasons over and over for why the Rhode Islanders I've spoken with want RCV in RI:

1. They want to know that whoever wins has a majority of voter support. The average American voter assumes that our elections are determined by majority-winners, but that is simply not the case. Voters express dissatisfaction and disappointment when presented with the data of how many elections are determined by far less than 50% of the vote. By allowing voters to express support for more than just one candidate we can more honestly represent that there are multiple approaches or candidates that we could get behind and are not as polarized as a people as the current voting methodology makes it appear.

2. They want campaigns to look different. If candidates are appealing to be someone's second preference, they must reach out to a larger demographic, and not only target a tiny sliver of the vote. In RCV, negative campaigning does not work. Candidates must identify common ground with other candidates to gain the support of their supporters. They have to talk about the approach they would take and their solutions to Rhode Island's problems – not vilify the other candidates. Overwhelmingly, voters I speak with want to stop the cycle of name calling or extreme positions. They want their vote to express who they support, instead of feeling like they have to vote against someone.

I would strongly encourage you to support House Bill 7540, which would implement ranked choice voting (RCV) for our state's presidential primaries starting in 2028.

Sincerely,

Leah Creiglow

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