



State of Rhode Island
COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
180 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 – Tel. 401-222-2661

TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: 2025 H 5538
BILL TITLE: Act Relating to Elections – Residence of Individuals in Government Custody Act
PRIMARY SPONSORS: Representative Cherie Cruz
COMMITTEE: House Committee on State Government & Elections
HEARING DATE: February 27, 2025

The Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (“Commission”) **supports** this bill.

The Commission is the state’s primary antidiscrimination law enforcement agency charged with investigating allegations of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and delivery of services. Among the allegations investigated by the Commission are those of race, ancestral origin, age and disability discrimination in employment and housing. **The Commission believes that passage of this bill would make redistricting more equitable.**

This bill would require that the state use the actual residence of persons in government custody for redistricting purposes. Currently use of actual residence for those in government custody is used only for those who have not yet been sentenced or who have short sentences.

The Commission asks that you join the many other states that have made this change, which is supported by many community groups. The current system has a negative effect on low-income communities and communities with a high percentage of minority voters.

The Commission urges you to support this bill.

Commission contact: Commissioner Cynthia Hiatt, 222-7563