

Testimony in support of H-5515:

Rhys Johnstone, Westerly, RI 02891

Date of Hearing: March 20, 2025

To Chairman Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

My name is Rhys Johnstone and I am resident of Westerly, RI 02891 and I am writing today to express my **strong support** for **H-5515**.

I am in **support of H-5515** because potential voters should not be penalized and miss voting due to arbitrary deadlines. Rhode Island has the longest voter registration deadline in the country, which causes many people to lose the opportunity to vote, come Election Day.

There is already evidence that same day voter registration works in Rhode Island. More than 9,000 registered on November 5th, 2024. However, this is only available for the presidential election in Rhode Island. With a voter turnout below the national average and the lowest in New England in 2024, Rhode Island needs to do more to make its elections more accessible to its citizens. Twenty-three other states allow for same day voter registration and these states, on average, have 3-7% higher turnout rates amongst voters.

It is time for Rhode Island to move forward with the rest of the country and implement same day voter registration for all elections so that a greater proportion of the electorate has the ability to express their views.

I hope that the House State Government and Elections Committee will advance H-5515.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rhys Johnstone

Westerly, RI 02891