

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley  
House State Government and Elections Committee  
Tuesday, March 18th 2025

Dear Chairman Shanley,

My name is Zhaocheng Yang, and I am an international student at Brown University and a proud member of Every Vote Counts. I have written this testimony to express my support for Resolution H5515, which would move us one step closer to implementing same-day voter registration.

As an international student actively involved in voter advocacy, I've seen firsthand how restrictive registration deadlines can negatively impact student engagement in civic life. Though I personally cannot vote due to my international status, my experience working closely with American peers at Brown has taught me how easily busy schedules, exams, and personal commitments can prevent timely voter registration. Same-day voter registration would dramatically lower barriers and empower students and young adults—who often move frequently or face demanding academic schedules—to participate more consistently and meaningfully in elections.

Moreover, adopting SDR would place Rhode Island among progressive states that actively encourage higher civic participation. My involvement with Every Vote Counts has given me a unique insight into how international students and global communities view U.S. democracy. A more inclusive, accessible voting system like SDR not only strengthens democracy domestically but also sets a powerful example internationally, showcasing Rhode Island's commitment to equitable civic engagement.

As a student at Brown University and member of Every Vote Counts, I believe Resolution H5515 is extremely important to expanding voter access and dismantling unnecessary roadblocks for all citizens in this state. I hope that you consider passing this piece of legislation to benefit Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Zhaocheng Yang