

**Rhode Island***Holding Power Accountable*[www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org)**Testimony on H 5711 and H 5873—An Action Relating to Elections—Mail Ballots****Position: Oppose**

Common Cause Rhode Island opposes H 5711 and H 5873, both of which would require that an application for a mail ballot include a voter's state ID number or driver's license number. If passed, these bills would prevent tens of thousands of otherwise eligible registered voters from voting by mail.

Since 2011 Rhode Island has incrementally increased access to mail ballots for registered voters while putting in place safeguards to protect against abuse and disenfranchisement. This legislation would be a significant step backwards for those efforts.

Many Rhode Islanders who are otherwise eligible to vote do not possess a driver's license or state ID number. They are among the most vulnerable of our citizens who need the option to vote by mail.

Rhode Island's mail ballot system has numerous safeguards. The signature provided as part of the application process is compared to all of the signatures on file with election officials. When the ballot is submitted, a second signature is again checked against all of the signatures on file with election officials. This is a process that is used successfully in all 50 states.

For decades Rhode Island fell behind in offering access to the ballot for eligible citizens. In recent years we have made significant progress in expanding access. We urge the committee to reject H 5711 and H 5873 and not reverse that progress.