

March 24, 2025

House Committee on State Government & Elections
Rhode Island General Assembly
Providence, Rhode Island

Re: Support for H 5874

Dear members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections:

The right to vote is given to constituents so that they can voice their interests, exercise political power, and hold their elected representatives accountable. However, in the state of Rhode Island, voting is not accessible to all eligible voters. Specifically, eligible voters who have been affected by incarceration struggle to access the information, resources, and services they need to exercise their right to vote.

In 2006, the Rhode Island Restoration of Voting Rights Act restored suffrage to all Rhode Island residents who are not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction. People on parole and probation, people being held on bail, people incarcerated for misdemeanor convictions, people on home confinement, people awaiting trial, and people who are incarcerated prior to conviction all have the right to vote. However, eligible voters impacted by incarceration face barriers to participation in our democracy due to ineffective or nonexistent policies and practices within our criminal legal system.

We, the members of the Formerly Incarcerated Union of Rhode Island, are calling for the creation and implementation of policies and practices codified into law that protect and ensure access to voting rights for people affected by incarceration such as outlined in this piece of legislation. We respectfully request that you support and pass H 5874 to further fulfill the constitutional rights of eligible voters impacted by incarceration.

Respectfully submitted,

Meko Lincoln, Co-Founder, Board of Director

Formerly Incarcerated Union of Rhode Island

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