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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 25-H 5874, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS – VOTING March 25, 2025

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this bill, which would make it easier for people who are eligible to vote but incarcerated at the ACI the ability to exercise this critical right.

As an organization dedicated to safeguarding and expanding access to the democratic process, we believe this legislation is a crucial step toward informing incarcerated individuals of their right to vote. Under the Rhode Island Constitution, anyone who is incarcerated for a misdemeanor offense, as well as those awaiting trial at the ACI, retain the right to vote. However, many eligible voters are unaware of this right or face significant barriers to exercising it while in prison.

As a result of this problem, this bill would establish a “jail voting coordinator” to assist individuals in exercising this critical right, and would require the posting of information about voting rights in the prison facilities. This legislation directly addresses the barriers that prevent eligible voters from participating, and we believe it will encourage those who are eligible to exercise their right to vote.

For these reasons, we support passage of this bill in promoting the exercise of this fundamental constitutional right. We thank you for considering our comments.