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ACLU OF RI POSITION: SUPPORT

TESTIMONY ON 26-H 7233, AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS – REGISTRATION OF VOTERS March 10, 2026

The ACLU of Rhode Island supports this legislation which would allow automatic voter registration for Rhode Islanders applying for hunting and fishing licenses.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, fishers and hunters purchase approximately 70,000 licenses, permits, stamps, and tags each year.¹ Integrating voter registration into this process would create an additional, practical opportunity for eligible Rhode Islanders to register to vote while they conduct other administrative business.

The General Assembly passed automatic voter registration to make registering to vote easy. That statement is still true today. Rhode Island's current DMV voter registration law, along with the National Voter Registration Act, encourages similar outreach from other state agencies that perform licensing services. R.I.G.L. 17-9.1-7(i). This legislation fits in well with that goal.

Allowing voter registration through the hunting and fishing licensing process will strengthen civic engagement and could have the potential to reach Rhode Islanders who might not otherwise encounter voter registration opportunities.

Thank you for considering our views.

¹ <https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/fish-wildlife>