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Testimony on behalf of: House Bill No. 7788: AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- PRIMARIES FOR ELECTION OF DELEGATES TO NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND FOR PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE (Establishes the Ranked Choice Voting for Rhode Island Presidential Primaries and provides for new sections on ranked choice voting tabulation and results reporting.)

Why I support this bill:

My name is Errol Danehy, and I live in East Providence. I support ranked choice voting (RCV) because—simply put—it enhances democracy. Rather than forcing voters to choose the lesser of two evils (as they often see it) it give a chance to candidates that really reflect what the voters want. It's a clear benefit to voters, without objective drawbacks.

Some may argue that RCV is too complicated, but this insults the intelligence of the voters. Ballots and polling places already contain instructions on how to vote. These could easily be updated with the new rules. In fact, Maine candidate Bruce Poliquin, who lost a 2018 RCV election, endorsed the system, calling it “really easy”.

I feel that the powers that be (the Republican and Democrat parties) benefit from knowing that at least one of their candidates will win, and thus oppose RCV. However, the current turmoil in this country shows that the status quo is failing. I urge Rhode Island's lawmakers to try something bold and enact ranked choice voting. At worst, it is a mistake and can be repealed. But at best, democracy will flourish in Rhode Island and we will all benefit from our voices being heard.