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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 Ranked Choice Voting in Rhode Island and why now?

The pivotal essence of America is governing by the will of the people. Simply put, our current plurality voting methodology does not allow the majority to express how they wish to be governed. By being forced into a binary decision of selecting only one candidate, we are left with fewer choices and the inability to express our grasp of the complexities which our body politic requires.

This method of voting statistically leads to polarization and an ever-growing sense that those elected are not representing them. This is an erosion at the heart of our country and we must act now.

Rhode Island should be a part of the emerging wave of Ranked Choice Voting support across the country. It empowers voters leading to higher turnout, it brings about a new campaign dynamic which focuses on issues and approaches rather than a cult of personality. You simply cannot win if your approaches or stances do not garner support from a majority of the voters.

Leveraging RCV for the presidential primary in 2028 would allow the time needed for voter education which can be concentrated on a single electoral event. This would allow us the highest potential for success and engagement.

Allowing municipalities the option to use RCV if they so choose is simply empowering the citizenry to select how they want to be governed. It is not the business of the government to limit our options or rights, it is your responsibility to assure that there are appropriate guardrails and impacts to the rights of the people are not abridged.

I urge you to not only support the concept of Ranked Choice Voting, but to secure the future of our democracy by urgently moving it forward this year. We simply cannot wait to make the changes needed to restore trust and the participation of the people in their government.

Thank you for the opportunity to have our voices be heard.

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