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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:

Good afternoon, members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives. My name is Luke Degnan, and I am a resident of Providence, Rhode Island. I am writing to express my strong support for adopting Ranked Choice Voting for Rhode Island's presidential primaries.

My support for Ranked Choice Voting comes in part from my own experience as a voter. In the 2016 election, I felt a strong pressure to vote for Hillary Clinton because I was worried about the outcome of the race. However, the candidate I truly believed in was Bernie Sanders. I remember feeling that I had to choose between voting for the person I thought was the best candidate and voting strategically to influence the final result. That experience made it clear to me that our current voting system often forces voters into difficult choices that don't fully reflect their true preferences.

Ranked Choice Voting offers a simple and practical solution to that problem. With RCV, voters can rank candidates in order of preference. If their first choice cannot win, their vote can still count toward their next preferred candidate. This allows people to vote honestly without worrying that they might accidentally help elect the candidate they least support.

This system is not theoretical. Ranked Choice Voting has been successfully used in places like Cambridge, Massachusetts, as well as in states such as Maine and Alaska. In these elections, RCV has helped ensure that winners have broader support among voters and has encouraged more positive campaigning between candidates.

Adopting Ranked Choice Voting for the 2028 presidential primary would give Rhode Island the opportunity to modernize our elections and strengthen voter confidence. It would give voters more freedom to support the candidates they truly believe in while ensuring that election winners reflect the will of a majority.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support the legislation establishing Ranked Choice Voting for Rhode Island's presidential primaries. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Luke Degnan