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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:

Dear Chair and committee members,

Like many Americans, I am dismayed by how polarized our country has become. I attribute this to the dominance of our two party system which favors more extreme candidates in both parties. Third party candidates don't have a chance with many people believing that if they vote for one, they'd be wasting their vote. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy with people either holding their noses and voting for the candidate they perceive as least bad or, worse, not voting at all.

I've seen ranked choice voting work in Maine where my mom and sister live. It has allowed Maine voters to vote their conscience and for their first choice candidate even if that candidate is not a Republican or Democrat without trying to prejudge which candidate is likely to succeed.

Without rank choice voting a candidate that the majority of voters do NOT want can win with less than 50% if the opposition vote is split between two or more candidates. This is exactly what happened in Maine before rank choice voting was implemented. Another advantage of rank choice voting is that it forces candidates to run on their ideas and proposed policies rather than relying on their party label.

We need rank choice voting in Rhode Island! Please support it!