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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:

I am writing in regards to bills H7981 and H7788. Both of these bills help Rhode Island establish a ranked choice voting system. I support both of these bills and I hope you all will agree.

Ranked choice voting has a number of benefits that promote a healthy democracy. One of the benefits is it ensures there is majority support for a candidate. When I vote it doesn't feel great to know a candidate only received twenty percent of the vote to win their position. It does not represent what the public voted for if a majority of votes don't go to a candidate. By allowing ranked choice, it helps the voting body feel like their voice was heard. When I vote I do consider who is the lesser of two evils. I want to stop only having to think this way when I vote because I don't want a "wasted" vote. With ranked choice it allows you to vote for the candidate you would like and then rank the lesser of two evils. This promotes a healthy voting system which will reduce the number of attack ads from candidates. These are just a couple benefits to consider about ranked choice.

There are negative arguments toward ranked choice voting but I believe they are unfounded and prove to not have much merit when ranked choice is established in a state. One of those arguments is that it violates "one person, one vote." This is inherently wrong because your vote still only counts once but you get a more even distribution of how you would like your vote to count. A more evenly distributed vote promotes a healthier democracy. Another argument is that it only helps one political party. This argument is also unfounded just like the previous argument you get to rank who you want the most. This means that everyone gets to pick whoever they think is best and then from there rank every other candidate you think best fits your preference. This inherently means that every party gets an even playing field.

With this I urge you to vote for both H7981 and H7788. These bills will give every Rhode Islander the ability to feel as represented as possible and allow for a stronger democracy. Thank you for your time.