

March 25, 2026

Dear House State Government and Elections Committee,

I am writing today in support of House Bill 7788. Jennifer Stewart is my Representative, and I appreciate her sponsorship of this bill. As a citizen of Rhode Island, it is my duty, as well as our lawmakers, to make sure that we monitor our governmental systems and call for change when current systems no longer serve the people of our state.

I think it's safe to say Rhode Island voters do not feel the current presidential primary voting system serves them as evidenced by a paltry voter turnout of around 5% in the 2024 RI presidential primary election. That is less than one-third of the voter turnout in the 2020 presidential primary, and one-fifth the voter participation in the 2016 presidential primary race. Those numbers make it clear that voters are unhappy with the current system and the candidates it serves up. I know that I would prefer to be able to *rank my choices* in a presidential primary because in the 2020 presidential primary race, over two million votes were wasted on candidates who withdrew from the race and delegates were awarded disproportionately to votes received. This is patently an unfair system. RCV may have made a difference in that primary. We are a representative democracy; therefore, voters should have more of a say in how we choose who we want to represent us.

In addition to making the process fairer, RCV has also been shown to improve consensus building, has a positive effect on the civility of political campaigns, eliminates the "spoiler" effect and is very easy to use. I am confident that these improvements would be very much welcomed by Rhode Island voters from all political parties.

It took Maine almost 20 years to get RCV in place. Let's not take that long to put these commonsense measures into place in RI. I urge you to vote in favor of Bill H7788 which allows the use of RCV in Presidential Primary Elections beginning in 2028.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sherri Simmons, Pawtucket