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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:

Written Testimony in Support of Ranked Choice Voting

House State Government & Elections Committee

My name is Tony Jones, and I am a Rhode Island resident and the founder of the Party Party of Rhode Island. I am writing in support of implementing Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in our state.

Rhode Island consistently sees a significant number of unopposed races at both the state and local level. In some election cycles, a large share of General Assembly seats go uncontested, leaving many voters without a meaningful choice on the ballot. In certain districts, the primary election effectively decides the outcome, and the general election offers no competition.

This lack of competition has real consequences. It can reduce voter turnout, limit new ideas, and weaken accountability. When voters feel their participation will not influence the outcome, they are less likely to engage in the process.

Ranked Choice Voting offers a practical and forward-looking solution. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference, RCV encourages more candidates to enter races without fear of splitting the vote. This is especially important in Rhode Island, where potential challengers, including independents and candidates outside the traditional party structure, may hesitate to run in lopsided races.

As the founder of the Party Party of Rhode Island, I have seen firsthand how difficult it can be to build momentum for new candidates in a system that discourages competition. RCV would create a more level playing field and give voters more voices and more meaningful choices.

RCV also ensures that winners have broader support. Instead of a candidate winning with a small plurality, the process reflects the preferences of a majority of voters. This leads to outcomes that better represent the electorate and can help build greater trust in our elections.

Adopting Ranked Choice Voting would be a meaningful step toward strengthening democracy in Rhode Island. It would encourage participation, increase competition, and ensure that our elections better reflect the will of the people.

Thank you for your consideration.