

April 15, 2026

Dear Chair Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

I am writing today in opposition to Bill H7380 which is a ban on Ranked Choice Voting in RI.

I am actually in favor of a Ranked Choice Voting system because it would make our democracy more *functional and more representative* for every Rhode Islander. I am tired of being forced to vote for a candidate that I do not prefer to avoid the “spoiler effect” which is endemic in our pluralistic voting system. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) eliminates the spoiler effect because it allows voters to support all the candidates their values align with. This makes RCV an ideal solution for promoting a diverse representation of people and values. In addition, with RCV in place, *candidates* can run without worrying about ruining their allies’ chances of winning. In other words, it encourages more people to run and gives voters more choices overall. And, despite the attempt of bill H7380 to make voters believe otherwise, voters still only get one vote.

I’ll also add this preemptive attempt to ban RCV is not very democratic. Voters in every corner of RI are fed up with the way our current system works. In recent years, big money has had an outsized influence on the behavior of our two largest political parties and on our elections. This has resulted in making a large portion of the voting public feel like the system is rigged. Ranked Choice Voting returns the vote **to the people** giving voters more choices and a real voice in our elections. It also reduces costs and eliminates the need for run-off elections, both of which I am sure RI taxpayers would welcome.

Attempting to ban a voting system on behalf of a public that has never heard of RCV, is rather surreptitious. Rhode Islanders deserve a chance to decide for themselves if they wish to institute RCV, a system that is in use in a wide range of jurisdictions across the country. With a coordinated effort by our elected officials and volunteers, a public education program explaining RCV to voters can be effective and then we can let the voters decide.

Voting is the backbone of our Democratic Republic. I urge the members of the committee to deny this bill the light of day.

Thank you,

Sherri Simmons

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Cc: Representative Jennifer Stewart