

## Steven Sepe

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**From:** ann ochiltrie <annschade@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 16, 2026 10:37 AM  
**To:** House State Government and Elections Committee  
**Subject:** In-Support of H8334

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To the Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Ann Ochiltrie of Barrington, RI, and I am here today on behalf of the Women's Policy Institute, a program of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island, to express my support for the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act, H8334.

Sixteen years ago, when I got married, I chose to take my husband's last name. My maiden name is "Schade," but I made what felt like a practical sacrifice to avoid the complication and risk of having multiple last names across our family records—our mortgage, our children's medical forms, school pickup authorizations, and other essential documents.

At the time, this felt like a reasonable decision. Today, that sacrifice has put my right to vote at risk.

The current administration attempts to change rules, redraw boundaries, and shift criteria around who can and cannot participate in the democratic process. These barriers determine who is heard, who is counted, and ultimately who benefits from our government.

That is why I am asking you to pass the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act, H8334. This legislation is essential to protecting access to voting for all Rhode Islanders who are eligible to vote.

I also urge you to take two critical steps:

1. Pass this bill during the current legislative session, and
2. Adopt the recommended provisions to ensure the Act goes into effect in time for the upcoming midterm elections.

The recent election in Hungary shows that voter participation is central to a free and fair democracy. High participation is not a threat to democracy- it's the foundation.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to protecting the voting rights of all Rhode Islanders.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Ochiltrie  
Women's Policy Institute  
Women's Fund of Rhode Island