

04/13/2026

House Committee on State Government and Elections
State of Rhode Island
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

RE: House Bill 8334

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

My name is Catherine Tiley and I am your constituent, more specifically a resident of Cranston, Rhode Island (Senate District 31, House District 16). I am part of the Women's Policy Institute with the Women's Fund of Rhode Island.

I am writing in **strong support** of House Bill 8334, The Rhode Island Voting Rights Act (RIVRA). This bill was created to codify and expand on the protections in the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 so that *all* Rhode Island voters - regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability status, country of origin, or English proficiency - are protected from voter dilution, suppression, intimidation, and discrimination. Given the ongoing dismantling of the Federal VRA and the current administration's clear intent to further limit voting, passage of the RIVRA needs to happen now. This is not a partisan issue - all Rhode Islanders are affected.

Voting in Rhode Island needs to be truly accessible to *everyone*. I have many members in my extended family who do not speak English as their first language. They spent years fighting for their citizenship, and as eligible voters they have the right to fully understand what they are voting for. The RIVRA addresses this by expanding language access, requiring qualifying municipalities to provide translated voting materials and ballots. Furthermore, increasing accessibility in voting also means ensuring voters with disabilities are provided accommodations. The RIVRA does just this by allowing voters with disabilities, as well as limited English proficient voters, to receive assistance while voting from a person they trust and get to choose themselves. As a person with a disability, and knowing many people with disabilities, having this option is greatly needed.

I urge you to pass a favorable report on House Bill 8334. Additionally, *I support the proposed amendments to the RIVRA outlined in the written testimony of the Campaign Legal Center*, so that this legislation more closely aligns to the Federal Voting Rights Act, and the clarity and strength of the RIVRA is increased. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Tiley
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910