



Conservation
Law Foundation

For a thriving New England

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Via Electronic Mail

April 16, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
House Lounge, State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: CLF Supports with Amendments House Bill No. 8334 – Rhode Island Voting Rights Act

Dear Chair Shanley:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 8334, the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act, which would create a voting rights act in Rhode Island primarily based on the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965. Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) supports this bill and wishes to thank its sponsors for their attention to this important issue.

CLF is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization working throughout New England to counter climate change and build a faster and fairer regulatory system responsive to science, the economy, and communities. We support legislation that protects democracy and preserves fundamental participatory rights.

H-8334 would largely preserve the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 in Rhode Island law. The Voting Rights Act was a landmark piece of civil rights legislation in American history, prohibiting discriminatory voting practices on the basis of race, color, or language minority group. This law was hugely successful. Racial voting registration disparity dropped significantly, and the voting rights of marginalized communities as a whole have been protected.

Despite these important successes, recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings have eroded elements of the federal Voting Rights Act, and it continues to be under attack. It is crucial that these protections are implemented and improved upon at the state level. H-8334 would ensure that all Rhode Island citizens are able to exercise their right to vote and challenge racial discrimination and voter suppression in elections.



CLF respectfully urges passage of H-8334. CLF also strongly supports the inclusion of the thoughtful revisions suggested by the Campaign Legal Center and the American Civil Liberties Union.¹

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrèll Brown", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Darrèll Brown
Vice President, Rhode Island
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty
Representative John G. Edwards
Representative Jenni A. Furtado
Representative Julie A. Casimiro
Representative Jennifer Boylan

¹ See *ACLU RI Testimony on S-3143*, <https://www.riaclu.org/app/uploads/2026/04/S-3143-Voting-Rights-Act.pdf> and *Campaign Legal Center Testimony on S-3143*, <https://campaignlegal.org/sites/default/files/2026-04/2026.04.06%20-%20RIVRA%20Sen.%20Judiciary%20Comm.%20Written%20Testimony%20%20%281%29.pdf>.