



Rhode Island Atheists

House Government & Elections Committee
Monday, April 13, 2026
SUPPORT H-8334

My name is Joseph Burgio, Director of Rhode Island Atheists. I am writing in support of the RI Voting Rights Act. During these dark times for our country, when the right to vote is under attack nationally, it is more important than ever to protect Rhode Island Voters. This issue is important to our organization, as there are now more atheist voters in the United States than ever before. Nonreligious citizens make up the largest religious demographic in our nation's elections and we're more likely to vote than religiously affiliated citizens.

Atheists believe that all people are fundamentally equal in moral worth. The power to vote reflects this ideal by giving every citizen an equal voice in shaping laws and leadership. Protecting voting rights is the optimal way of promoting societal fairness and reducing injustice. Ensuring broad access to voting helps guarantee that government most accurately represents the needs and interests of society.

Freedom of conscience is a core value of most atheists. By protecting voting rights, we safeguard against any one ideology dominating public policy. When participation is wide and inclusive, it becomes harder for institutions and special interests groups to impose narrow belief systems through law. For atheists, there is no divine or supernatural guard over the power of our elected officials. As such, voting serves as a check on authority. Without broad and unrestricted voting access, political power becomes corrupted and accountability is diminished. Elections allow citizens to reward our leaders' competence, punish corruption, and replace them peacefully.

As nonbelievers, we are most concerned with responsibility in this life, rather than salvation in another. Decisions about healthcare, education, labor, and justice have immediate consequences for real people. Ensuring that everyone affected by these decisions has a voice is a practical and ethical way to focus on human well-being. Atheists support policies grounded in reason, data and real-world outcomes rather than doctrine. Broad voter participation and incorporating diverse human experience, our government can operate based on evidence-based decision making. When voting rights are undermined, it reduces feedback to lawmakers, entrenches power, and weakens the ability of society to correct policies when evidence shows they are harmful.

Thank you, Joseph Burgio
Director
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