

Lily Luby
Regarding Senate Judiciary Committee
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Good evening, Chairman LaMountain and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Lily Luby and I am a first-year student at Brown University studying International and Public Affairs as well as a member of the organization Brown Votes. I am here to testify in favor of Senate Bill 2132, which would move toward same day voter registration in the state of Rhode Island.

While I am a student at Brown University, I hail from Glastonbury, Connecticut, where same day voter registration exists and is consistently implemented to help citizens access their civic duty of voting. My mother is one of the strongest advocates for same day voter registration, and I have witnessed her do so on presidential election days in the past, when she would take me along to the polls to witness democracy in action. In recent local elections in my town, I have registered on the same day in order to support candidates who I otherwise would not have been able to, as I attend college in another state and was only able to visit home on election day.

In Rhode Island, the 30-day restrictive period on voting registration would have made much of my voting experience inaccessible. I would not have been inspired by my mother's presidential voting, as she would not have been able to walk into the voting station on election day and fulfill her civic duty. I also would not have been able to participate in my own local election due to the inconvenience of having to travel back and forth multiple days instead of only on election day, when I had a day off from school.

The restrictive 30-day voter registration period not only inconveniences citizens across the state who may not be able to go in person to register to vote other than on election day, when they have the day off from work or school, but prevents even those who may have been able to from voting. Much of election programming and outreach happens in the two or three weeks prior to an election, already within the 30-day period, meaning that anyone reached and inspired to vote during that time period who was not previously registered would not be able to participate and would be potentially discouraged from voting in the future. Considering that 61% of people polled by Let RI Vote in April 2021 supported same day voter registration, compared with 54% on an AFL-CIO poll in February 2025, the population of Rhode Island clearly supports this initiative, in addition to the 23 other states and DC already offering same day registration. College students who arrive on campus in late August are also left unable to vote by the restrictive deadline, with the earliest primaries held in mid September.

At perhaps the most divisive time in the history of American politics, voting is the opportune way for citizens to shape our nation for generations to come. As the founding fathers intended, civic participation is our fundamental right, and thus must be protected and encouraged, accounting for those who may not have the ability to register within 30 days of an election. Thank you for your time and consideration.