

H. Philip West Jr.

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Matthew L. LaMountain, Chair  
SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
**Support 26-S 3143**

Thank you, Chair LaMountain and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary for considering 26-S 3143 by Senate President Lawson and others. This vital legislation aims to protect Rhode Islanders against the Trump Administration's vote suppression and voter intimidation.

My name is H. Philip West Jr. I regret not being able to testify in person today. I submit this testimony as a private citizen and resident of Pawtucket.

I believe all Rhode Island voters should have equal access to the ballot box regardless of race, color, disability, gender, or marital status.

Six decades ago, I joined other seminarians – Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish – in advocating for what became the Civil Rights Act of 1964. I later worked with countless other Americans for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. I have often witnessed the courage of Americans as they marched toward equal rights and opportunities for all people.

Tragically, the United States Supreme Court has issued a series of decisions – particularly *Shelby County v. Holder*, *Abbott v. Perez*, *Alexander v. South Carolina State Conference of the NAACP*, and *Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee* – that undercut the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Worse, Donald Trump campaigned with frequent signals to White Christian Nationalists that he would do all in his power to roll back what remained of civil rights protections. He seeks voter information that will allow his subordinates to suppress the votes of poor and minority voters.

26-S 3143 by Senate President Lawson and others will protect the most vulnerable Rhode Islanders from these assaults on their rights.

I respectfully urge passage of 26-S 3143.

Sincerely,



H. Philip West Jr