

Support of S3142

From Johnson, Olivia <ojohnson981@g.rwu.edu>

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To Senate Judiciary Committee <SenateJudiciary@rilegislature.onmicrosoft.com>

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Dear Chairman LaMountain,

My name is Olivia Johnson and I am a resident of Exeter. I am writing to express my strong support of S3143.

Voting rights are arguably the most protected rights in the Constitution. Four separate amendments are dedicated to protecting the right to vote. Still, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was necessary and needed, and is regarded as the most successful civil rights legislation of the 20th century. Despite this fact, the federal Voting Rights Act continues to be gutted, thereby threatening the right to vote, particularly for minoritized and marginalized communities. S3143, the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act, would protect Rhode Islanders' right to vote, regardless of the status of the federal Voting Rights Act.

As a woman, I take voting particularly seriously. As you know, women did not gain the right to vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, 132 years after the Constitution was ratified. Threats to the right to vote strike particularly close to home. I have worked as a poll worker during the pandemic, worked pro bono for voting rights organizations, and exercised my right to vote at every opportunity since the day I turned 18. This important right, the right to participate in one's government, must be stringently protected.

I hope the Senate Judiciary Committee will pass S3143.

Thank you for your consideration.

Olivia Johnson
Exeter, RI

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