



## Testimony in favor of Rhode Island Voting Rights Act S 3143

Dear Senator LaMountain and members of the Committee,

Voting is the most important civic privilege and duty that a citizen has. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a preeminent civil rights achievement but its effectiveness has been eroded by the U.S. Supreme Court. With weakened protections on the Federal level, we are fortunate to be able to turn to the states to provide protections.

From the very beginning, our country has been founded on a set of ideals that we continue to strive to achieve. We also struggle with some imperfections that need to be corrected. Over the years, in spite of the stated ideal of the equality of all people, minority groups have been excluded from full social and civic engagement. This is a preventable moral flaw that could be corralled by legal guardrails and not affirmed by statute.

We are and always have been a diverse society. Diversity is a blessing that demands care and nurturing. We need to create a legal framework that recognizes equality and encourages the presence of the better angels of our nature.

I encourage the Rhode Island General Assembly to take action to protect the voting rights of our citizens. I urge passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

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