



Testimony in Support of S-3143 – Voting Rights Act
Senate Committee on Judiciary
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The Economic Progress Institute strongly supports President Lawson’s S-3143, which would create the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act to establish procedures to prevent discrimination in the voting process.

Rhode Islanders deserve to exercise their constitutionally protected right to vote without unnecessary hindrances or obstacles. However, the weakening of the federal Voting Rights Act (via Supreme Court decisions) has significantly reduced key protections that once prevented discriminatory voting practices, particularly in states with histories of voter suppression. By limiting federal oversight—such as preclearance requirements, US Supreme Court rulings have made it easier for restrictive voting laws to be enacted without prior review, raising concerns about unequal access to the ballot. Accordingly, state action has become increasingly important to safeguard voting rights, ensure fair access, prevent discrimination, and maintain public confidence in democratic participation.

S-3143 would protect Rhode Islanders’ constitutional right to vote. If elected officials truly seek to represent Rhode Islanders, they should ensure elections are fair and aspire to be elected by as many voters as possible. We strongly urge passage.