



April 6, 2026

The Honorable Sen. Matthew LaMountain, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island Statehouse
Providence, 02903

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 3143
AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS – RHODE ISLAND VOTING RIGHTS ACT**

On behalf of United Way of Rhode Island, we strongly support **Senate Bill 3143**, which would establish the **Rhode Island Voting Rights Act** and create clear procedures to prevent discrimination in the voting process.

United Way's policy and advocacy work is guided by our strategic framework: **Strong Families, Strong Nonprofits, Strong United Way**. We prioritize policies that strengthen household stability, expand access to opportunity, and ensure public systems work effectively for everyone. Protecting fair access to the ballot is part of that foundation; when residents can participate fully, communities are better positioned to shape priorities that affect education, health, and economic security.

United Way of Rhode Island also sees firsthand why accessible elections infrastructure matters. As partners with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's office, our **211 helpline** helps deliver accurate, timely election information and referrals to Rhode Islanders seeking guidance on registration, voting options, and key election logistics. In 2024, **nearly 6%** of inquiries handled by 211 were related to state election information. This work reflects a simple reality: many voters need clear, trusted information—and accessible systems—so they can participate without unnecessary barriers.

Senate Bill 3143 advances that goal by establishing state-level protections against discriminatory voting practices, including safeguards against voter suppression, vote dilution, intimidation, and other forms of unequal treatment.

United Way of Rhode Island respectfully urges your support for **Senate Bill 3143**. Ensuring fair, accessible, and nondiscriminatory elections strengthens civic participation and supports the stable, inclusive communities Rhode Islanders deserve.

Sincerely,
Elijah McLean
Manager, Government Relations & Policy
United Way of Rhode Island