

Senator Osten, Senator Hwang and distinguished members of the Governor's Ranked Choice Voting Working Group:

My name is Baird Welch-Collins and I am from Marlborough. I am a supporter of Voter Choice Connecticut and a long-time advocate of ranked choice voting.

I am testifying in favor of implementing ranked choice voting in Connecticut for state, local and federal elections.

Ranked choice voting is one of the simplest and most critical electoral reforms that our state can achieve. The goal of every election is to represent the *will* of the American people and RCV accomplishes exactly that. As a social studies teacher, I frequently field questions from students who are concerned that their votes will not count or matter in our current electoral system. RCV is a reform that benefits everyone, regardless of politics or party, by ensuring that the candidate voters most want to see elected actually represents them in office.

Over the past few years, Connecticut has made significant progress towards strengthening our freedom to vote, especially by making it easier to vote. But strengthening our democracy requires more; it requires that winning candidates better reflect the will of the people. That is what ranked choice voting delivers.

As a teacher of history, I know that American democracy is strongest when it is safeguarded against manipulation. RCV does exactly that and provides voters with the freedom to pick the candidates they most agree with and trust that their vote will always count.

There is no meaningful way to reform and strengthen Connecticut's democratic system than through the passage of ranked choice voting for our elections.

I recognize that there may be state constitutional barriers to adopting RCV for state and federal offices, but in addition to proposing legislation to implement RCV for party primaries and municipal elections, I encourage you to pursue legislation that would allow the use of RCV for all elections.

Sincerely,

Baird Welch-Collins
Marlborough, CT