

Dear Members of the Governor's Working Group on Ranked Choice Voting,

Thank you for allowing me to share this testimony with you. My name is Colin Hosten, and I am proud to serve as an At-Large Member of the Norwalk Board of Education, where I advocate for equity and excellence in education for all our students. As an educator, a writer, and a resident of Norwalk, I have a deep commitment to fostering inclusive, representative, and forward-thinking policies that benefit our community. I believe that adopting Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), particularly as an option for municipal elections, can strengthen the representation of underrepresented voices in Connecticut and empower every community to build a more inclusive future.

As a leader in a diverse and vibrant city, I have seen how important it is to give all voices the opportunity to be heard. RCV is one way we can ensure that every voter, especially those in underrepresented communities, feels that their vote truly matters. During your October 4th meeting, members of this group discussed the ways RCV encourages broader coalition-building and collaboration, which can create a stronger sense of unity across our communities. By giving voters the freedom to rank their choices, RCV makes it possible for more voices to be part of the conversation, fostering greater trust in our electoral system and a stronger connection between voters and their representatives.

One of the aspects of RCV that I find particularly appealing is the flexibility it offers municipalities. Cities like Norwalk have their own unique character and set of needs, and not every community may be ready to implement RCV immediately. However, by allowing municipalities the option to adopt RCV, Connecticut empowers each community to make the choice that best aligns with its goals and values. Offering RCV as a choice for local elections would allow cities like Norwalk to decide if and when RCV is the right fit for our residents, fostering local engagement and giving us the tools to advance our shared priorities.

RCV is not just a procedural change; it's a way to make our elections more representative of the communities they serve. Fair representation is especially critical for communities that have historically been marginalized or left out of political processes. In a city as diverse as Norwalk, RCV would make it easier for candidates from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives to run and find support.

Implementing RCV in presidential primaries and party primaries at the state level would also benefit Connecticut as a whole, ensuring that nominees emerge with a broad base of support. At the municipal level, the flexibility to choose RCV as an option would empower communities to select the voting system that best meets their specific needs, without a statewide mandate. I believe this approach balances innovation with local autonomy, respecting the unique nature of each town and city while providing a powerful tool for enhancing representation and building trust in government.

In closing, I urge this Working Group to recommend a bill that enables RCV for presidential primaries, party primaries, and as an option for municipalities. RCV is a step toward a more equitable, representative democracy, and by giving municipalities the choice to adopt it, Connecticut can lead the way in fostering an inclusive political environment that truly reflects the diversity and vibrancy of our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Hosten', with a stylized, cursive script.

Colin Hosten  
At-Large Member, Norwalk Board of Education