



**TOWN OF STONINGTON
SELECTMAN'S OFFICE
DANIELLE CHESEBROUGH
FIRST SELECTMAN**

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November 5, 2024

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and for your ongoing service to our state.

As you are no doubt aware, RCV offers several important opportunities for our State and Country. Today, I'd like to focus on just one of these key benefits, as it directly addresses a pressing issue that affects us all—the erosion of trust in government and the increasing polarization that undermines our ability to govern effectively.

A comprehensive study from the Pew Research Center highlights a troubling trend: there is widespread criticism of all branches of government, both major political parties, as well as political leaders and candidates for office. Trust in government is far too low, and polarization negatively affects all of our abilities to govern. Research continues to show Democrats and Republicans viewing the other party as not just opponents, but “a threat to the nation’s well-being”.

This polarization is not limited to partisan divides. It also affects local communities, where even shared challenges become a source of division rather than cooperation. However, with every challenge comes an opportunity for change—and Ranked Choice Voting offers a powerful way to address this issue.

RCV incentivizes positive, issue-based campaigning and reduces the incentives for negative, divisive tactics. In a typical "winner-takes-all" system, candidates often engage in attack ads and contentious rhetoric to mobilize their base.

Introduce RCV and candidates now need to appeal not only to their own supporters, but also to those of other candidates, because votes can transfer from eliminated candidates. This creates an incentive for candidates to focus on real issues, with plans for addressing challenges and capitalizing on opportunities- rather than stoking division.

Furthermore, RCV ensures that the winner of an election has majority support, meaning that they are more likely to be someone who appeals to a broader cross-section of the electorate. In a divided political landscape, this could lead to more representative and less polarized governance. Elected officials chosen through RCV are more likely to understand and represent the diverse perspectives of their constituents, which can lead to more stable and effective leadership.

Ranked Choice Voting is a fairer, more inclusive, and more efficient way to conduct elections. It encourages greater participation, reduces the effects of negative campaigning, and fosters a more constructive political discourse. By providing voters with a greater range of choices and ensuring that elected officials truly represent the majority, RCV has the potential to restore trust in our political system.

For these reasons, I hope we can work together to ensure the successful adoption of Ranked Choice Voting in Connecticut. While we may only be able to start with smaller changes to our elections, it is a very important to start somewhere. This chance to improve our electoral process and contribute to a healthier, more collaborative political environment that better reflects the will of the people is something we can all continue to work for together. I believe by Connecticut joining other communities around the country in moving toward RCV, we will help lead our country to a better place for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D Ch", is positioned above the typed name.

Danielle Chesebrough