

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

My name is Richard Walser, I am from Hamden, CT. I am a long-term supporter of ranked choice voting in Connecticut and also volunteer with various organizations in raising awareness of climate change and supporting legislation to address it. I am testifying in favor of implementing ranked choice voting in Connecticut for state, local and federal elections.

For too long, climate change has been a highly partisan issue. There was a time when this was not the case and where Republican solutions to this problem were some of the most promising available. I believe that ranked choice voting would help our political process address this and other pressing issues by giving candidates more confidence to pursue issues such as climate change that would normally be outside the scope of their party while also giving voters the confidence to register their approval of these changes without the fear they would be spoiling the candidacy of their second choice or of their party, especially in primaries.

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.

Ranked choice voting would help candidates appeal to what is best in people and avoid the toxic negativity that has become the norm in our elections. It is a tried and tested method of voting that is used in statewide elections in Maine and Alaska, including in their presidential general elections. It is also used in some of our nation's largest cities including New York City and San Francisco. Six states use RCV for military and overseas voters, so that they can easily participate in congressional runoff elections. Overall, 20 million Americans live in jurisdictions that use RCV.

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. Having just witnessed the most bizarre and toxic presidential race of my lifetime, I am more convinced than ever that reforms such as this are now way overdue. Our democracy is in peril and adopting RCV is one of the most necessary reforms we need to safeguard it.

Sincerely,

Richard Walser

Hamden, CT