

November 8, 2024

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

My name is Jennifer Rodney. I grew up and started my adulthood in Stamford. I now live in Zürich, Switzerland, but return home to Connecticut, where my family, friends and heart reside, on a regular basis (will be there soon for Christmas!). Although I live across the pond for now, I remain a concerned and involved Connecticut and US citizen. I vote from abroad, have been involved in GOTV efforts for Americans abroad, and regularly petition for, donate to, contact my representatives about and otherwise support issues I care about that impact the fellow citizens, state, and country I hold so dear.

One of my greatest concerns, today more than ever, is the state of – and threat to – our democracy.

It is through my activism work that I learned about rank choice voting (RCV). And because of what I've learned about RCV, I am testifying in favor of implementing ranked choice voting in Connecticut for state, local and federal elections.

Legal scholar and Yale graduate Edward Foley called RCV the election reform “most likely to save democracy.” While this statement may or may not be true, and clearly work needs to be done on ALL FRONTS to safeguard our democracy, we need to use every tool and every avenue possible to improve, shore up and defend our democracy.

RCV is tried and tested. It's used statewide in Maine and Alaska, including in their presidential general elections. It produces election outcomes that are more representative of the electorate. It gets rid of unintended consequences of our current plurality voting system where candidates can win with a majority of voters preferring other candidates. And I believe it can create a more stable society.

Living in Switzerland, a direct democracy, I see the stark contrast between a country where voters are given more and better options and a country where elections deprive voters of meaningful choices, feature increasingly toxic campaigning and advance candidates who lack broad support. Switzerland has four major political parties (as well as viable minor parties) that problem solve together far more effectively than America's deeply divided Democrats and Republicans, and the Swiss government offers a great deal of stability.

While RCV offers a different approach than the Swiss system, it gives voters more choice and produces winning candidates who better represent the will of the majority.

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.

It's because of this that I urge you to do what is within your power to strengthen our precious but fragile democracy, and to enact Ranked Choice Voting in Connecticut.

I recognize that there may be state constitutional barriers to adopting RCV for state 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, including federal offices.

Many thanks for your consideration, and all the work you do in service to Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rodney

Stamford, CT (via Zürich, Switzerland)