

## **Testimony in favor of Ranked Choice Voting for the Public Hearing on RCV 11-8-24**

Dear Members of the Working Group,

Thank you for holding this hearing and reading my testimony. I strongly support the implementation of Ranked Choice Voting in Connecticut (and beyond).

Until we change the way we elect our representatives, we will never see a meaningful change in the hyper partisanship that is undermining our politics and government. And, without a functional government that is more responsive to voters, it's hard to see how we will ever make significant progress on the broader issues we face.

Political dysfunction may not be as bad in Connecticut as it is in Washington and elsewhere but, by adopting RCV (and open primaries) in this state, we can not only start to fix our own broken election system, but we can serve as an important example for the rest of the country. We need elected officials who are willing and able to do the painstaking work of reaching compromise on the issues that divide us, but our current system all too often rewards partisan candidates who do more to divide us than bring us together.

Ranked choice voting is by no means a perfect solution – no such solution exists unfortunately – but it offers a significant improvement on the current system. First, it ensures that in races with 3 or more candidates the winners will always have majority support (i.e. no more candidates winning with less than 50% of the vote). Second, it gives voters more opportunity to express their true preferences, without worrying about the impact of "spoiler" candidates (think Ross Perot in 1992 or Ralph Nader in 2000). And, third, because of the potential importance of second and third choice votes, it encourages candidates to reach out beyond their base and find more common ground, while discouraging negative campaigning.

Unfortunately, there are legislators who personally benefit from the current hyper partisanship and probably care more about preserving the status quo than giving voters more choice, so I understand why they would be against RCV (and open primaries). Others may be in favor of it conceptually, but are concerned about the complexities of implementation. To them I say, yes, there are aspects of implementation that could be complicated and no doubt there will be bumps along the way, but the unavoidable truth is that a complex, pluralistic society often requires complex solutions. When the stakes are as high as they are right now, I don't see how we can afford NOT to roll out RCV.

Thank you for your consideration.

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