

November 7, 2024

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

My name is Suzanne Solensky, and I live in Stratford. As a supporter of Voter Choice Connecticut, I am in favor of implementing ranked choice voting in Connecticut for state, local, and federal elections.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) gives voters more input into who gets elected, and as a result elections in which RCV has been used can lead to outcomes that better reflect the overall population. For instance, when New York City used RCV for the first time in 2021, citizens elected the second-only Black mayor as well as the most racially and ethnically diverse city council ever. Minority representatives increased from 53% to 64% of the body, and (again for the first time ever) women made up a majority of the council, with 31 members, 25 of whom were women of color.

Not only does ranked choice voting ensure that winning candidates will be representative of the population, but it also appeals to voters. After their first experience with RCV in 2021, 77% of NYC voters wanted to use it again. In Alaska, which held its first elections with RCV in 2022, eight out of 10 voters said that they found RCV very simple (59%) or simple (20%) to use.

It is therefore not surprising that the momentum for RCV has been growing. Earlier this week, in fact, nearly three quarters of voters in Washington, DC, voted to adopt RCV for all primary and general elections.

Like many other Connecticut residents, I benefited this year from early voting – held for the first time in our state. By implementing early voting and moving toward no-excuse absentee voting, Connecticut has done much in recent years to strengthen our freedom to vote. I believe that Connecticut should continue the progress by enacting RCV, an election reform that the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a civic engagement organization that is nearly as old as our democracy itself, recommended as a key strategy to achieve “equality of voice and representation.”

Although there may be state constitutional barriers to adopting RCV for state and federal offices, I encourage you to support RCV and its promise of increased civic participation. I ask that you propose legislation to implement RCV for party primaries and municipal elections – and that you pursue ways to allow RCV in all elections.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Solensky
Stratford, CT