



Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.

Partnering for Prosperous Communities Since 1965

November 7, 2024

Governor's Ranked-Choice Voting Working Group
Connecticut State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Support for Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)

Dear Chairs and Esteemed Working Group Members,

The Thames Valley Council for Community Action (TVCCA) is one of Connecticut's nine federally-designated Community Action Agencies. Our mission is to abolish poverty in our catchment area, which is the 21 towns of New London County. Moreover, we aim to advocate for those who are disenfranchised by poverty and the systems that allow and perpetuate it. While types of voting and the abolition of poverty may sound like two very different topics, I am here to tell you that they are inexorably intertwined.

On June 14, 2022, the American Medical Association passed Resolution 422, acknowledging that "voting is a social determinant of health and significantly contributes to the analyses of other social determinants of health as a key metric." We know through scientific study that there is a strong relationship between civic participation and improved health outcomes right alongside income, housing, transportation, and access to nutritious food and clean water. Those who participate in civic activities are more likely to have better health outcomes, and we need to do whatever we can to enfranchise and encourage all members of our society to vote.

According to Gallup, as of their most recent poll that ran from October 14 – 27, 2024, 29% of Americans identify as Republican, 32% identify as a Democrat, and the plurality, 37%, identify as Independent. Applying that data to the number of registered voters in the United States, we can estimate that over 60 million individuals do not identify with one of the two major parties. Even in a first-past-the-post voting system, we know that around 2 million individuals still chose to vote for a candidate that was not Donald Trump or Kamala Harris for President; even scarier, only 65% of the country's registered voters decided to cast their ballot, meaning tens of millions did not even feel invested enough in the current system to choose to vote. That is a lot of people who we can easily assume do not feel empowered by the current voting system or supported by the politicians here in Connecticut that work to keep the first-past-the-post system.

Ranked-choice voting gives individuals the opportunity to express their support for candidates across the political spectrum without fear that their vote will not matter. With the redistribution of votes until a single candidate has claimed a majority of the support of the electorate, voters will be more free to express their opinions and they will gain confidence in democratic systems, since they will know that the

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winner of each and every election will be individuals who received a majority of the support of the electorate, not just a nominal plurality.

Increased voter turnout in jurisdictions using ranked-choice voting has already been demonstrated by a study published by ScienceDirect in 2024 which found that an individual is 17% more likely to vote in a district with RCV than those in districts without RCV. Connecticut is not the first to seek to adopt RCV by any means; this is a form of voting used around the world and increasingly around our country, with RCV having taken hold in Maine, Hawaii, Alaska, and scores of municipalities. We are behind the ball; it is time for Connecticut to do what is needed to promote greater civic participation and ensure great trust in our democratic systems.

I encourage you to move forward with the adoption of ranked-choice voting immediately.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this testimony. I can be most readily reached at josh.kelly@tvcca.org or 860-912-7624.

Respectfully submitted,

Joshua Steele Kelly, CEO