



State of Rhode Island COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

180 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 – Tel. 401-222-2661

TESTIMONY

BILL NO.: 2024 H 7849
BILL TITLE: Act Relating to Elections – Mail Ballot
PRIMARY SPONSORS: Representative Carson
COMMITTEE: House State Government & Elections

The Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (“Commission”) **supports** this bill which increases the accessibility of drop boxes in statewide and federal elections.

The Commission is the state’s primary antidiscrimination law enforcement agency charged with investigating allegations of discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and delivery of services. Among the allegations investigated by the Commission are those of race, ancestral origin, age and disability discrimination in employment and housing.

The Commission believes that passage of this bill, which would make it easier for Rhode Island citizens to vote, would increase voting by ethnic minorities, the elderly, people with disabilities and those who are poor. This bill would provide that drop boxes be accessible beginning thirty-five (35) days prior to the date of statewide or federal elections.

It is evident that voters who rely on others for transportation, such as senior citizens without driver's licenses, or those with certain disabilities, will have more opportunity to vote if this bill passes.

The voices of all Rhode Island citizens need to be heard. This bill would increase the opportunity for all Rhode Island voters to participate in our democracy. The Commission urges that you pass H 7849.

Commission contact: Commissioner Cynthia Hiatt, 222-7563