

## Testimony on H 5709—An Action Relating to Elections—Mail Ballots

Position: Support

Common Cause Rhode Island supports H 5709 that expands who is eligible to be on the permanent mail ballot application list. We have long supported increased access to the ballot and believe this is a reasonable next step in making mail voting available.

Since changes made by the General Assembly in 2011, Rhode Island has seen a steady expansion of voters who choose to vote by mail. In 2022 the Let RI Vote Act removed the need for the voter to provide an excuse to receive a mail ballot. It also incrementally expanded who is eligible to be on the permanent mail ballot application list. This is yet another step in that evolution.

It's important to note that a voter who successfully applies to be on the expanded list will only receive a mail ballot application. The voter will have to successfully complete an application each time they wish to vote by mail. All of the safeguards in place for mail ballot applications will be applied for each election.

Currently eight states already mail every registered voter a ballot and an additional eight states allow voters to join a list to receive a mail ballot for every election. What is being proposed in H 5709 is far behind the opportunities to vote by mail that are presented to voters in many other states.

We urge the committee to support H 5709.