



TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT OF SB 1536**
THE USE OF RANKED-CHOICE VOTING IN PARTY CAUCUSES,
CONVENTIONS AND PRIMARIES, INCLUDING
PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE PRIMARIES.
March 24, 2025

To: Co-Chairs Sen. Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, and Distinguished Members of the Government Administration & Elections Committee

From: Connor Yakaitis, Deputy Director, CT League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of SB 1536**. Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV) is a nonpartisan, statewide organization that advocates for pro-environment policies and ensures that voters can make informed choices at the ballot box.

CTLCV strongly supports this bill, which allows the use of Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) in party caucuses, conventions, and primaries, including presidential preference primaries. Expanding access to RCV is a significant step toward a more inclusive and representative democracy that empowers voters to prioritize candidates who align with their values, especially environmental protection, climate action, and racial justice.

The urgency of the climate crisis and the need for strong environmental leadership make it imperative that voters have the tools necessary to elect candidates who truly represent their priorities. RCV strengthens our democracy in several key ways that directly benefit environmental advocacy and racial equity:

Encouraging Issue-Based Campaigns – RCV incentivizes candidates to appeal to a broader range of voters, fostering more substantive discussions on policies rather than divisive rhetoric. Environmental issues, especially those related to pollution, public health, and climate resilience, disproportionately impact communities of color. By ensuring that candidates engage in meaningful conversations about these critical concerns, Ranked Choice Voting helps elevate racial justice issues.

Reducing Vote-Splitting and Strengthening Coalitions – Under the current system, multiple pro-environment and pro-equity candidates in a crowded primary can divide the vote, leading to the election of a candidate who does not prioritize these critical issues. RCV prevents this by allowing voters to rank their preferred candidates, ensuring that their vote continues to count even if their first choice is eliminated. This is particularly important for historically marginalized communities that have fought for a political voice in shaping policies that impact their lives.

Increasing Voter Participation – Many voters feel disillusioned when forced to choose between candidates who may not fully reflect their values. This is particularly true in communities of color, where voter suppression and systemic barriers to participation have historically diminished electoral influence. RCV gives all voters the confidence to vote for their first choice without fear of wasting their vote. This increased engagement is essential to electing leaders committed to protecting our environment and advancing racial equity.

Fostering More Representative Leadership – Traditional electoral systems often favor well-funded, establishment candidates who may not fully represent the needs of diverse communities. RCV levels the playing field by allowing candidates from underrepresented backgrounds a fairer shot at winning elections. This results in leadership that more accurately reflects the racial and socioeconomic diversity of Connecticut and ensures that policymakers are accountable to all constituents, particularly those most impacted by environmental degradation.

Ranked Choice Voting is a proven, nonpartisan method that has been successfully implemented in states and municipalities across the country. Studies show that it leads to higher voter satisfaction, increased voter participation, and more diverse representation in government. It also reduces the likelihood of negative campaigning, as candidates would still be considered a second or third choice in this system.

In a state like Connecticut, where residents overwhelmingly support strong environmental protections and racial justice, we must ensure that our electoral system reflects the will of the people.

By passing SB 1536, Connecticut has an opportunity to lead in expanding voter choice and strengthening democracy. We urge this committee to support the bill and advance a voting system that better serves our communities, our democracy, and our environment. Ensuring that all voices are heard, especially those historically excluded from the political process, is essential for achieving environmental justice and a sustainable future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working together to ensure a more inclusive, environmentally conscious, and equitable democracy.

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