

Letter to the Editor: Pass the Rhode Island Voting Rights Act Now

Rhode Island stands at a pivotal moment for voting rights.

In its recent decision in *Callais*, the U.S. Supreme Court weakened key protections under the federal Voting Rights Act, including the ability to challenge vote dilution. For decades, these protections helped ensure fair representation. Now, they are no longer reliable.

As the League of Women Voters has long affirmed, voting is a fundamental right—and a right that cannot be fully exercised is not truly a right. While Rhode Island has made progress, many residents still face barriers based on race, language, disability, age, and other factors.

The *Callais* decision makes state action urgent. While federal protections may be eroding, states retain the power to protect their voters. State Voting Rights Acts are among the most effective tools to prevent discrimination and voter suppression.

The Rhode Island Voting Rights Act (RIVRA) would strengthen protections against vote dilution, increase transparency, expand language access, and provide clear pathways to challenge barriers to voting. It would ensure these protections endure regardless of shifting federal priorities.

For more than a century, the League of Women Voters has stood on the side of voters, especially those excluded from full participation in our democracy. This moment calls for that same commitment.

When federal protections weaken, states must lead.

Rhode Island has both the opportunity and the responsibility to act. Passing RIVRA will help ensure that every voice is heard and every vote counts.

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