



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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**Testimony Re: H-7100 An Act Relating to
Elections - Let RI Vote Act
House State Govt. & Elections Committee
March 24, 2022
Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst**



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the Right from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that will help families with young children.

Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the Right from the Start Campaign strongly support H-7100, *the Let RI Vote Act*.

Parents with young children (and other caregivers) often work long hours, are very likely to live in economically unstable households, and have additional caregiving responsibilities that can make it difficult for them to find time to vote.

The Let RI Vote Act will make the temporary changes to facilitate voting during a pandemic permanent, preserving access and opportunity to vote by mail or early in-person, and will create an online system to request a mail ballot, require secure drop-boxes for mail ballots, create a multilingual voter information hotline, and enhance voter registration list maintenance.

In particular, it is really important to update the statute so that anyone can vote by mail for any reason and to remove the notary/witness requirement for mail ballots. We also very much support the change in statute that will allow voters to request a mail ballot through a website and to provide a multilingual hotline to answer questions about voting in Rhode Island.