



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Date agenda posted: January 9, 2026

AGENDA

The Board of Elections will meet in person at its offices located at 2000 Plainfield Pike, Suite A, Cranston, Rhode Island. The public is welcome to attend this meeting in person. Additionally, the public may view this meeting online by using the following YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/@boardofelections9481>

For access via public transportation, use bus route #19 Plainfield/Westminster. Schedule information is available at www.ripta.com.

Procedures for remote viewing for this meeting are also posted on the Board Website: www.elections.ri.gov

Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 4:00 P.M.

1. The Board may hear and vote upon proposed legislation presented by the staff of the Board of Elections for submission to the General Assembly for the 2026 legislative session. The proposed legislation is attached to the agenda.
2. The Board may hear and vote upon proposed legislation presented by the Office of the Secretary of State for submission to the General Assembly for the 2026 legislative session. The proposed legislation is attached to the agenda.
3. The Board may hear and vote upon proposed legislation presented by the RI Cities and Towns Clerks Association for submission to the General Assembly for the 2026 legislative session. The proposed legislation is attached to the agenda.
4. The Board may hear and vote upon proposed legislation presented by a member of the Board of Elections for submission to the General Assembly for the 2026 legislative session. The proposed legislation is attached to the agenda.
5. The Board may hear and vote upon the certification of Logic & Accuracy Testing for voting equipment to be used in the special referendums for North Smithfield and Warwick and the special elections for Coventry Council Districts 4 & 5 to be held on February 3, 2026.
6. The Board may hear and discuss a report from the staff on the results of the Poll Print (ballot-on-demand) pilot.
7. The Board may discuss and vote upon the adoption of the modified Relocation of Polling Places rule and regulation 410-RICR-20-00-26.

8. The Board may discuss and vote upon a proposal to return up to fifty (50) out-of-service Oki ballot printers to Election Systems & Software for credit or funds.

All meetings of the Board are open meetings, and all interested parties are invited to attend. Any questions concerning the agenda should be directed to Miguel J. Nunez, Executive Director, at 401-222-2345. Anyone wishing to attend this meeting who may have special needs for access or services such as hearing assistance or interpreter services, please contact the Board as soon as possible in advance of the meeting.

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS



Miguel J. Nunez
Executive Director

§ 17-19-37. Tabulation of state and federal returns — Certificate of election.

The state board shall proceed to tabulate the state and federal election returns and declare the results as provided in chapter 22 of this title, and any candidate at the election challenging the result as applied to him or her may petition the board within ~~seven~~nine (79) days after the declaration to conduct a recount of the votes cast in the candidate's election according to the provisions set forth in § 17-19-37.1. After the completion of the recount, and as soon as it can do so consistent with its other duties, the state board shall issue a certificate of election to the state and federal candidate it determines to have been elected.

This act would increase from seven (7) days to nine (9) days the period of time in which a request for a recount of the votes cast can be made to the board of elections. No certificates of election may be issued, until the recount if any is completed. This act would take effect upon passage.

DRAFT

§ 17-20-13. Form of application.

The application to be subscribed by the voters before receiving a mail ballot shall, in addition to those directions that may be printed, stamped, or written on it by authority of the secretary of state, be in substantially the following form:

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND APPLICATION OF VOTER FOR BALLOT FOR ELECTION ON _____

(COMPLETE HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS)

NOTE — THIS APPLICATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE BOARD OF CANVASSERS OF YOUR CITY OR TOWN NOT LATER THAN 4:00 P.M. ON _____

BOX A (PRINT OR TYPE)

NAME _____
VOTING ADDRESS _____
CITY/TOWN _____ STATE RI ZIP
CODE _____
DATE OF BIRTH _____ PHONE

Rhode Island driver's license/State Identification number OR the last four digits of your Social Security number _____

BOX B (PRINT OR TYPE)

NAME OF INSTITUTION (IF APPLICABLE) _____
ADDRESS _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY/TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP
CODE _____
FACSIMILE NUMBER (if applicable) _____

I CERTIFY THAT I AM ELIGIBLE FOR A MAIL BALLOT ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS: **(CHECK ONE ONLY)**

- 1. I am incapacitated to such an extent that it would be an undue hardship to vote at the polls because of illness, mental or physical disability, blindness, or a serious impairment of mobility. If the ballot is not being mailed to your voter registration address (BOX A above) please provide the Rhode Island address where you are temporarily residing in BOX B above.
- 2. I am confined in a hospital, convalescent home, nursing home, rest home, or similar institution within the State of Rhode Island. Provide the name and address of the facility where you are residing in BOX B above
- 3. I am employed or in service intimately connected with military operations or because I am a spouse or dependent of such person, or I am a United States citizen and will be outside the

United States. Complete BOX B above or the ballot will be mailed to the local board of canvassers.

() 4. I may not be able to vote at the polling place in my city or town on the day of the election. If the ballot is not being mailed to your voter registration address (BOX A above) please provide the address within the United States where you are temporarily residing in BOX B above. If you request that your ballot be sent to your local board of canvassers please indicate so in BOX B above.

BOX D OATH OF VOTER

I declare under the pains and penalty of perjury that all of the information I have provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I further state that I am not a qualified voter of any other city or town or state and have not claimed and do not intend to claim the right to vote in any other city or town or state. If unable to sign name because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write, the applicant shall mark the box to indicate the voter cannot sign due to blindness, disability, or inability to read or write, and include the full name, residence address, signature, and optionally the telephone number and e-mail address of the person who provided assistance to the voter.

SIGNATURE IN FULL _____

Please note: A Power of Attorney signature is not valid in Rhode Island.

§ 17-20-13.1. Form of emergency mail ballot application.

The emergency mail ballot application to be subscribed by the voters before receiving a mail ballot shall, in addition to any directions that may be printed, stamped, or written on the application by authority of the secretary of state, be in substantially the following form:

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND EMERGENCY APPLICATION OF VOTER FOR
BALLOT FOR ELECTION ON _____**

(COMPLETE HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS)

**NOTE — THIS APPLICATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE
BOARD OF CANVASSERS OF YOUR CITY OR TOWN NOT LATER THAN 4:00 P.M.
ON _____**

BOX A (PRINT OR TYPE)

NAME _____

VOTING ADDRESS _____

CITY/TOWN _____ STATE RI ZIP

CODE _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

Rhode Island driver's license/State Identification number OR the last four digits of your Social Security number _____

PHONE# _____
BOX B (PRINT OR TYPE) _____
NAME OF INSTITUTION (IF APPLICABLE) _____
ADDRESS _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY/TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
CODE _____

I CERTIFY THAT I AM ELIGIBLE FOR A MAIL BALLOT ON THE FOLLOWING BASIS: **(CHECK ONE ONLY)**

1. I am incapacitated to such an extent that it would be an undue hardship to vote at the polls because of illness, mental or physical disability, blindness or a serious impairment of mobility. If not voting ballot at local board, ballot will be mailed to the address in BOX A above or to the Rhode Island address provided in BOX B above. If the ballot is to be delivered by the local board of canvassers to a person presenting written authorization to pick up the ballot, complete BOX A above and fill in the person's name below.

I hereby authorize _____ to pick up my ballot at my local board of canvassers.

2. I am confined in a hospital, convalescent home, nursing home, rest home, or similar institution within the State of Rhode Island. Provide the name and address of the facility where you are residing in BOX B above.

3. I am employed or in service intimately connected with military operations or because I am a spouse or dependent of such person, or I am a United States citizen who will be outside the United States. If not voting ballot at local board, provide address in BOX B above.

4. I choose to vote by mail. If the ballot is not being mailed to your voter registration address (BOX A above) please provide the address within the United States where you are temporarily residing in BOX B above. If you request that your ballot be sent to your local board of canvassers please indicate so in BOX B above.

I hereby authorize _____ to pick up my ballot at my local board of canvassers.

BOX D OATH OF VOTER

I declare that all of the information I have provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I further state that I am not a qualified voter of any other city or town or state and have not claimed and do not intend to claim the right to vote in any other city or town or state. If unable to sign name because of physical incapacity or otherwise, applicant shall make his or her mark "X".

SIGNATURE IN FULL _____

Please note: A Power of Attorney signature is not valid in Rhode Island.

§ 17-20-26. Opening and counting of ballots.

(a)(1) Beginning prior to and continuing on election day the state board, upon receipt of mail ballots, shall keep the ballots in a safe and secure place that shall be separate and apart from the general public area and sufficiently monitored through security measures including security cameras. The board shall, beginning twenty (20) days prior to and continuing on election day, proceed to certify the mail ballots.

(2) Notice of these sessions shall be given to the public on the state board of elections' website and the secretary of state's website posted at least twenty-four (24) hours before the commencing of any session. All candidates for state and federal office, as well as all state party chairpersons, shall be given notice by telephone, email or otherwise of the day on which ballots will be certified; provided, that failure to effect the notice shall in no way invalidate the ballots.

(b) This processing shall be done within a ~~railed space in the room in which it takes place~~ secure area, and the board shall provide an area for public observation of the process ~~admit within the railed space~~, in accordance with those rules that the board shall adopt, to witness the processing and certification of the ballots, the interested voter or the voter's representative, the candidates, or at least one representative of each candidate for whom votes are at the time being processed, and an equal number of representatives of each political party. These representatives shall be authorized in writing by the voter, the candidate, or the chairperson of the state committee of the political party, respectively, as the case may be. The board shall also, in accordance with these rules, admit representatives of the press and newscasting agencies and any other persons that it deems proper.

(c) At these sessions, and before certifying any ballot, the state board shall:

(1) Determine the city or town in which the voter cast his or her ballot; and

(2) Compare the name, residence, and signature of the voter as it appears on the certification envelope, with the name, residence, and signature on the central voter registration system for mail ballots and satisfy itself that both signatures are identical. The board shall designate two (2) persons, to review and compare each voter's signature with the voter's signature found in the central voter registration system. If both designees agree that the signatures match, the mail ballot shall proceed to be processed, certified, and tabulated. In the event that one or both designees find a discrepancy with the voter's signature, the certification envelope shall then be reviewed by a pair of supervising board staff members. If the pair of supervising board staff members find that the signatures match, then the mail ballot shall proceed to be processed, certified, and tabulated. In the event that one or both supervising board staff members find a discrepancy in the voter's signature, the supervising board staff shall compare the signature on the certification envelope to the signature on the voter's ballot application, and may also consider other identifiers, including the voter's Rhode Island driver license number/State identification number, or the last 4 digits of the voter's Social Security number, as provided by the voter on the mail ballot application. If the pair of supervising board staff members find that the voter's signature is valid, those signatures match, then the mail ballot shall proceed to be processed, certified, and tabulated. In the event that one or both supervising board staff members continue to find a discrepancy with in the voter's signature, the supervising board staff shall compare the signature on the certification envelope to the voter's ballot application. If the pair of supervising board staff members find that the signatures match, then the mail ballot shall proceed to be processed, certified, and tabulated. In the event that one or both supervising board staff members find a discrepancy in the voter's signature, the certification envelope shall be segregated, and the board will notify the voter of the discrepancy, in accordance with regulations and procedures promulgated by the board. Any segregated certification envelope that has not been cured or fully addressed by the voter, in accordance with the board's promulgated regulations and procedures, shall be reviewed by the board to make a final determination on the validity of the mail ballot application and signature set forth on the certification envelope.

(d) [Deleted by P.L. 2015, ch. 259, § 1.]

(e) The board shall promulgate regulations that allow for challenges to the certification process by the interested voter, the voter's representative, the candidates, and representatives of the recognized political parties. Such challenges shall be made to the executive director of the board, or the executive director's designee. The decision of the executive director or designee shall be subject to review by the board.

(f) After processing and certification of the mail ballots, they shall be separated in packages in accordance with their respective cities and towns, in the presence of all interested parties. Thereupon, in each instance the board staff shall open the enclosing envelope, and without looking at the votes cast on the enclosed ballot, shall remove the ballot from the envelope. The board staff shall proceed to tabulate the ballots through the use of a central count optical-scan

unit with the same effect as if the ballots had been cast by the electors in open town or district meetings.

(g) When a local election is held at a time other than in conjunction with a statewide election, the state board, after the processing and certification of the mail ballots cast in the local election, shall have the authority to count the ballots in the same manner and with the same effect as state mail ballots are counted by the state board in a statewide election. Once the ballots are counted, the results shall be transmitted to the local board.

This act would require the Board of Elections establish a secure area for the public observation of mail ballot processing and require the mail ballot voter's signature be compared to the signature on file within the state Central Voter Registration System. This act would take effect upon passage.

DRAFT

Title 17

Elections

Chapter 25

Rhode Island Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting

R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-25-11

§ 17-25-11. Dates for filing of reports by treasurers of candidates or of committees.

(a) During the period between the appointment of the campaign treasurer for state and municipal committees and political action committees, or in the case of an individual the date on which the individual becomes a “declared or undeclared candidate” as defined in § 17-25-3(3), except when the ninety-day (90) reporting period ends less than forty (40) days prior to an election in which case the ninety-day (90) report shall be included as part of the report required to be filed on the twenty-eighth (28th) day next preceding the day of the primary, general, or special election pursuant to subsection (a)(2) of this section, and the election, with respect to which contributions are received or expenditures made by him or her in behalf of, or in opposition to, a candidate, the campaign treasurer of a candidate, a political party committee, or a political action committee shall file a report containing an account of contributions received, and expenditures made, on behalf of, or in opposition to, a candidate:

(1) At ninety-day (90) intervals commencing on the date on which the individual first becomes a candidate, as defined in § 17-25-3(3);

(2) In a contested election, on the twenty-eighth (28th) and seventh (7th) days next preceding the day of the primary, general, or special election; provided, that in the case of a primary election for a special election where the twenty-eighth (28th) day next preceding the day of the primary election occurs prior to the first day for filing declarations of candidacy pursuant to § 17-14-1, the reports shall be due on the fourteenth (14th) and seventh (7th) days next preceding the day of the primary election for the special election; and

(3) A final report on the twenty-eighth (28th) day following the election. The report shall contain:

subsection shall be no later than the last day of the month following the ninety-day (90) period, except when the last day of the month filing deadline following the ninety-day (90) reporting period occurs less than twenty-eight (28) days before an election, in which case the report shall be filed pursuant to the provisions of subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section. Provided, however, if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, the report shall be due on the following business day.

(g)(1) The board of elections may, for good cause shown and upon the receipt of a written or electronic request, grant a seven-day (7) extension for filing a report; provided, that the request must be received no later than the date upon which the report is due to be filed.

(2) Any person or entity required to file reports with the board of elections pursuant to this section and who or that has not filed the report by the required date, unless granted an extension pursuant to subsection (g)(1) of this section, shall be fined twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), provided that in the case when a candidate has not filed the report by the required due date, the fine shall be assessed against the candidate; and in all other instances, the fines shall be assessed against the chairperson of the political action committee or political party committee required to file such report. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this section, the board of elections shall have the authority to waive late filing fees for good cause shown.

(3) The board of elections shall send a notice of non-compliance, by certified mail, to any person or entity who or that fails to file the reports required by this section. A person or entity who or that is sent a notice of non-compliance and fails to file the required report within seven (7) days of the receipt of the notice, shall be fined two dollars (\$2.00) per day from the day of receipt of the notice of non-compliance until the day the report has been received by the state board, provided that in the case when a candidate has not filed the report by the required due date, the fine shall be assessed against the candidate; and in all other instances, the fines shall be assessed against the chairperson of the political action committee or political party committee required to file such report. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this section, the board of elections shall have the authority to waive late filing fees for good cause shown.

(h) The maximum fine that may be assessed by the board of elections against a person or entity required to file reports pursuant to this section shall be no greater than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for any one report which has not been ~~not~~ filed or was filed later than the prescribed due date. Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this

shall be the next account statement issued by their financial institution after the filing of the fourth quarterly campaign expense report. The account statement shall be submitted to the board within thirty (30) days of its receipt by the candidate, officeholder, treasurer, or deputy treasurer. The account statement shall not be deemed a public record pursuant to the provisions of chapter 2 of title 38. The board of elections, its agents, and employees shall not publish, deliver, copy, or disclose, to any person or entity any account statement or information contained therein for any candidate, former candidate, officeholder, party, or political action committee. Provided, as to state and municipal political parties, the requirements of this subsection (c)(2) shall apply to the annual report required pursuant to § 17-25-7.

(d)(1) There shall be no obligation to file the reports of expenditures required by this section on behalf of, or in opposition to, a candidate if the total amount to be expended in behalf of the candidacy by the candidate, by any political party committee, by any political action committee, or by any person shall not in the aggregate exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

(2) However, even though the aggregate amount expended on behalf of the candidacy does not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000), reports must be made listing the source and amounts of all contributions in excess of a total of two hundred dollars (\$200) from any one source, within a calendar year. Even though the aggregate amount expended on behalf of the candidacy does not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000) and no contribution from any one source, within a calendar year two hundred dollars (\$200), the report shall state the aggregate amount of all contributions received. In addition, the report shall state the amount of aggregate contributions that were from individuals, the amount from political action committees, and the amount from political party committees.

(e) On or before the first date for filing contribution and expenditure reports, the campaign treasurer may file a sworn statement that the treasurer will accept no contributions nor make aggregate expenditures in excess of the minimum amounts for which a report is required by this chapter. Thereafter, the campaign treasurer shall be excused from filing all the reports for that campaign, other than the final report due on the twenty-eighth (28th) day following the election.

(f) A campaign treasurer must file a report containing an account of contributions received and expenditures made at the ninety-day (90) intervals provided for in subsection (c) of this section for any ninety-day (90) period in which the campaign received contributions in excess of a total of two hundred dollars (\$200), within a calendar year from any one source and/or made expenditures in excess of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) within a calendar year; however, the time to file under this

(i) The name and address and place of employment of each person from whom contributions in excess of a total of two hundred dollars (\$200), within a calendar year were received;

(ii) The amount contributed by each person;

(iii) The name and address of each person to whom expenditures in excess of two hundred dollars (\$200), were made; and

(iv) The amount and purpose of each expenditure.

(b) Concurrent with the report filed on the twenty-eighth (28th) day following an election, or at any time thereafter, the campaign treasurer of a candidate, or political party committee, or political action committee, may certify to the board of elections that the campaign fund of the candidate, political party committee, or political action committee having been instituted for the purposes of the past election, has completed its business and been dissolved or, in the event that the committee will continue its activities beyond the election, that its business regarding the past election has been completed. The certification shall be accompanied by a final accounting of the campaign fund, or of the transactions relating to the election, including the final disposition of any balance remaining in the fund at the time of dissolution or the arrangements that have been made for the discharge of any obligations remaining unpaid at the time of dissolution.

(c)(1) Once the campaign treasurer certifies that the campaign fund has completed its business and been dissolved, no contribution that is intended to defray expenditures incurred on behalf of, or in opposition to, a candidate during the campaign can be accepted. Until the time that the campaign treasurer certifies that the campaign fund has completed its business and been dissolved, the treasurer shall file reports containing an account of contributions received and expenditures made at ninety-day (90) intervals commencing with the next quarterly report following the election; however, the time to file under this subsection shall be no later than the last day of the month following the ninety-day (90) period, except when the last day of the month filing deadline following the ninety-day (90) reporting period occurs less than twenty-eight (28) days before an election, in which case the report shall be filed pursuant to the provisions of subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section. Provided, however, if the last day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, the report shall be due on the following business day.

(2) In addition to the reports required pursuant to this section, a candidate or office holder shall also file with the board of elections a paper copy of the account statement from the office holder's campaign account, which account statement

section, the board of elections shall have the authority to waive late filing fines and suspend a delinquent filer's campaign finance account for good cause shown.

History of Section.

P.L. 1974, ch. 298, § 1; P.L. 1981, ch. 188, § 1; P.L. 1982, ch. 347, § 1; P.L. 1984, ch. 2, § 1; P.L. 1990, ch. 33, § 1; P.L. 1992, ch. 21, § 1; P.L. 1998, ch. 263, § 1; P.L. 1999, ch. 284, § 1; P.L. 2001, ch. 176, § 2; P.L. 2006, ch. 174, § 1; P.L. 2006, ch. 292, § 1; P.L. 2007, ch. 299, § 1; P.L. 2015, ch. 18, § 1; P.L. 2015, ch. 23, § 2; P.L. 2016, ch. 511, art. 1, § 9; P.L. 2023, ch. 357, § 1, effective January 1, 2024; P.L. 2023, ch. 377, § 1, effective January 1, 2024.

DRAFT

DRAFT - Final Version
Removing the 30-day Voter Registration Constitutional Restriction

RESOLVED, That a majority of all members elected to each house of the general assembly voting therefor, the following amendment to the Constitution of the state be proposed to the qualified electors of the state in accordance with the provisions of Article XIV of the Constitution for their approval and that it take place of Article II, Sections 1 and 2 which are hereby amended, effective January 1, 2027, to read as follows:

ARTICLE II
OF SUFFRAGE

SECTION 1. Persons entitled to vote.

Every citizen of the United States of the age of eighteen years or over who ~~has had residence and home in~~ is a resident of this state ~~for thirty days next preceding the time of voting~~ and resides ~~has resided thirty days~~ in the town or city from which such citizen desires to vote, and whose name shall be registered ~~at least thirty days next preceding the time of voting~~ as provided by law, shall have the right to vote for all offices to be elected and on all questions submitted to the electors, except that no person who has been lawfully adjudicated to be non compos mentis shall be permitted to vote. No person who is incarcerated in a correctional facility upon a felony conviction shall be permitted to vote until such person is discharged from the facility. Upon discharge, such person's right to vote shall be restored. The general assembly may provide by law for ~~shorter state and local residence and registration~~ requirements to vote for all offices to be elected and on all questions submitted to the electors ~~for president and vice president of the United States.~~

SECTION 2. Nomination of candidates — Voter registration — Absentee voting — Conduct of elections — Residency.

The general assembly shall provide by law for the nomination of candidates, but no person shall be eligible to file a declaration of candidacy who has not been a qualified elector in Rhode Island for at least thirty (30) days; for a uniform system of permanent registration of voters; for the exemption from such registration of persons in the active service of the nation and their families absent from the state because of such service, and, in time of war, members of the Merchant Marine; for absentee and shut in voting; for the time, manner and place of conducting elections; for the prevention of abuse, corruption and fraud in voting; and may define by law residence for voting purposes, but no person shall acquire such residence merely by being stationed or assigned in this state in the active service of the United States.

RESOLVED, That this amendment shall take, in the Constitution of the State, the place of Section 1 and Section 2 of Article II of the Constitution;

It is further

RESOLVED, That said proposition of amendment shall be submitted to the electors for their approval or rejection at the next statewide general election. The voting places in the several cities and towns shall be kept open during the hours required by law for voting therein for general officers of the state; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause the said proposition of amendments to be published as part of this resolution in the newspapers of the state prior to the date of the said meetings of the said electors; and the said proposition shall be inserted in the warrants or notices to be issued previous to said meetings of the electors for the purpose of warning the town, ward, or district meetings, and said proposition shall be read by the town, ward, or district meetings to be held as aforesaid; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the town, ward, and district meetings to be held aforesaid shall be warned, and the list of voters shall be canvassed and made up, and the said town, ward, and district meetings shall be conducted in the same manner as now provided by law for the town, ward, and district meetings for the election of general officers of the state.

DRAFT - Final Version
Moving the Primary Day

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 17-14-1, 17-14-4, 17-14-11, 17-14-12, 17-14-13 and 17-14-14 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-14 entitled "Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates" are hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 17-14-1. Declarations of candidacy.

~~During the last consecutive Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in June~~ In the even years on the seventy-seventh (77th) and seventy-eighth (78th) day before the primary election held on the ninth (9th) Tuesday preceding biennial general statewide elections, or on the seventy-eighth (78th) and seventy-ninth (79th) day before a biennial statewide primary election held on the Wednesday after Labor Day pursuant to § 17-15-1, and during the thirty-ninth (39th) and fortieth (40th) days preceding a primary election for a special election, or for an election regularly scheduled for a time other than the biennial general statewide election, or during the sixty-seventh (67th) and sixty-eighth (68th) days preceding a primary election for a special election for federal office, or for an election for federal office regularly scheduled for a time other than the biennial general statewide election, each voter desiring to be a candidate at the upcoming primary or an independent candidate on final nomination papers shall, on a form that shall be provided by the secretary of state, file a declaration of his or her candidacy not later than four (4:00) p.m. of the last day for the filing with the secretary of state for congressional and statewide general offices, or with the local board of the place of the candidate's voting residence for general assembly, or state committee or senatorial and representative district committee or with the appropriate local board for local officers. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the first day declarations are due is a holiday, the declarations shall be filed on the next two (2) subsequent business days. The declaration shall be signed by the candidate as his or her name appears on the voting list. The signature shall be accepted as valid if it can be reasonably identified to be the name and signature of the voter it purports to be. A variation of the voter's signature by the insertion or omission of identifying titles or by the substitution of initials for the first or middle names of both shall not in itself be grounds for invalidation of the signature. The declaration shall also include the following information:

- (1) The candidate's name as it appears on the voting list, subject to the same provisions as relate to the voter's signature on the declaration;
- (2) The address as it appears on the voting list, provided that an address which is substantially the same as the address on the voting list shall be valid;
- (3) The party declaration if seeking to run in a party primary;
- (4) The office sought;
- (5) The place and date of birth;
- (6) The length of residence in the state and in the town or city where he or she resides;
- (7) A certification that he or she is neither serving a sentence, including probation or parole, for which he or she was imprisoned upon final conviction of a felony imposed on any date nor serving any sentence, whether incarcerated or suspended, on probation or parole, upon final conviction of a felony committed after November 5, 1986;
- (8) A certification that he or she has not been lawfully adjudicated to be non compos mentis, of unsound mind;
- (9) In the case of candidates for party nomination, a certification that he or she has not been a member of a political party other than the declared party within ninety (90) days of the filing date; and
- (10) If a person is a candidate for a state or local office, a certification that the person has not within the preceding three (3) years served any sentence, incarcerated or suspended, on probation or parole, for a crime committed after November 5, 1986, upon a plea of nolo contendere or guilty or upon a conviction of

a felony or for a misdemeanor for which a sentence of imprisonment for six (6) months or more, whether suspended or to be served as imposed.

**§ 17-14-4. Preparation of nomination papers for candidates — Combination of endorsed candidates —
Furnishing of nomination papers to candidates.**

(a) Upon receipt of the declarations referred to in § 17-14-1, within two (2) business days of the final date for filing endorsements the secretary of state for statewide candidates and the local board for general assembly and local candidates shall prepare nomination papers for each person who has filed a declaration of candidacy as provided in § 17-14-1, provided that, in years when there is a holiday during the declaration of candidacy, endorsement, or nomination paper preparation period, the nomination papers shall be furnished to candidates within one (1) business day. A minimum of three (3) sets of nomination papers shall be prepared for each candidate whose name appears on nomination papers containing the name of a candidate for general assembly and for local office. Nomination papers for voters from the city of Providence for the offices enumerated in § 17-14-1 shall be furnished by the secretary of state. Nomination papers shall be prepared with the name of the candidate as it appears on the voting list, notwithstanding that the candidate may have signed their declaration of candidacy other than as the candidate's name appears on the voting list. Candidates for nomination for different offices endorsed by the appropriate committee of any party shall be combined on the same nomination papers. The names of candidates for different offices not endorsed by the appropriate committee of any party shall not be combined on the same nomination papers. Nomination papers for candidates for general assembly shall be furnished by the local board of the general assembly candidate. Nomination papers shall be furnished to the local boards by the secretary of state and each shall bear the imprint of the state coat of arms and any additional language required by law. Nomination papers shall be appropriately marked or color coded to indicate the different political parties, the endorsed and unendorsed candidates of those parties, and independent candidates.

(b) Candidates for nomination may, at their own expense, have nomination papers duplicated in exact appearance and as prescribed in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Nomination papers furnished by the secretary of state shall be personally issued to the candidate, or in the case of combined nomination papers to one of the candidates, for whom they were prepared, or to an individual presenting written authorization from the candidate, or one of the candidates appearing on them, to receive the nomination papers.

§ 17-14-11. Checking and certification of nomination papers — Challenge.

(a) Each nomination paper for party and independent candidates shall be submitted before four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the ~~sixtieth (60th)~~ sixty-first (61st) day before the primary to the local board of the city or town where the signers appear to be voters or, in the case of special elections, on the twenty-eighth (28th) day before the primary. Nomination papers for independent presidential candidates and presidential candidates of political parties, other than those defined in § 17-1-2(9), shall be filed not later than ~~sixty (60)~~ sixty-seven (67) days prior to the general election. Each local board shall immediately proceed to check signatures on each nomination paper filed with it against the voting list as last canvassed or published according to law.

(b) The local boards shall certify a sufficient number of names appearing on the nomination papers that are in conformity with the requirements of § 17-14-8 to qualify the candidate for a position on the ballot, and after considering any challenge under this section and, if necessary, certifying any additional valid names, shall immediately file nomination papers for statewide office, general assembly, and state and district committee candidates with the secretary of state; provided, that nomination papers for local candidates shall be retained by the local board.

- (c) If any candidate or an individual presenting written authorization from the candidate, or the chairperson of any party committee questions the validity or authenticity of any signature on the nomination paper, the local board shall immediately and summarily decide the question, and for this purpose, shall have the same powers as are conferred upon the board by the provisions of § 17-14-14.
- (d) If any challenged signature is found to be invalid, for any reason in law, or forged, then the signature shall not be counted.
- (e) The local canvassing clerk shall immediately notify the state board in writing and via electronic mail if the local canvassing clerk suspects a consistent pattern of forgery as prescribed by § 17-23-17 on the nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate.
 - 1) The state board, upon notification of allegations of any consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures on nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate, shall review the allegations and, if determined to be with reasonable cause, shall, as soon as feasible notify all corresponding local canvassing clerks of the allegations of suspected forgery.
 - 2) The state board, if it deems necessary, shall order a review of all nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include a consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection. The state board, in consultation with the Elections Committee of the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association, shall promulgate rules and regulations on the process to review nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include a consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection.
 - 3) The state board shall explicitly determine and deliver, in writing and via electronic mail to the secretary of state, the findings of the review of local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection, and whether the determination affects a candidate's qualification for a position on the ballot.

§ 17-14-12. Filing of nomination papers.

All nomination papers for state offices or officers and all certified lists of candidates for local offices or officers shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state (the certified lists by the respective local boards), not later than ~~fifty-four (54)~~ fifty-five (55) days before the date of the primary held to nominate candidates for general election; but when there is a primary to nominate candidates for any office mentioned in § 17-15-7 to be voted upon at a special election, all nomination papers and lists of local candidates shall be filed in the office on or before the twenty-sixth (26th) day preceding the day of the special primary election. Nomination papers for independent presidential candidates and presidential candidates of political parties other than those defined in § 17-1-2(9) shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state by the local boards of canvassers not later than ~~fifty-four (54)~~ sixty-one (61) days before the date of the election.

§ 17-14-13 Objections to eligibility of candidate or sufficiency of papers.

When nomination papers have been duly filed and are in apparent conformity with § 17-14-11; they shall be conclusively presumed to be valid, unless written objections to them are made as to the eligibility of the candidate or the sufficiency of the nomination papers or the signatures on them. All objections for local candidates shall be filed at the local board by four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the fifty-sixth (56th) day before the primary. All objections for federal and state candidates shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state ~~or of the local board, as the case may be,~~ by four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the ~~next business day after the last day fixed for filing nomination papers in the appropriate office as provided in this chapter,~~ fifty-fourth (54th) day before the primary. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the secretary of state or the local board, as the

case may be, from disqualifying a candidate based on the determination of the secretary of state or the local board, acting on its own motion, that the candidate is ineligible or the nomination papers or the signatures on them are invalid or insufficient.

§ 17-14-14. Hearings on objections — Witnesses — Notice.

(a) All objections to nomination papers which are required to be filed with the secretary of state shall be considered by the state board. The secretary of state shall, when requested by the state board, immediately deliver to the board the nomination papers to which objection has been filed. The state board may, at the hearing on the objections, summon witnesses, administer oaths, and require the production of books, papers, and documents. The witnesses shall be summoned in the same manner, be paid the same fees, and be subject to the same penalties for default as witnesses before the superior court. A summons may be sworn to and an oath may be administered by the board. When an objection has been filed, notice of the objection shall be immediately given by registered or certified mail or by personal service by the state board to the candidates, addressed to the residence of the candidate as given in the nomination papers, and to any party committee interested in the nomination to which objection is made. The state board shall promulgate rules and regulations on challenges to nomination papers filed by any candidate, an individual presenting written authorization from the candidate, or the chairperson of any party committee that questions the validity or authenticity of any signature on the nomination paper of a candidate.

(b) Additional notice may also be given by the state board if it sees fit to do so. The decision of the board shall be rendered within two (2) days for nomination papers for candidates participating in a primary election and thirty-five (35) days for nomination papers for candidates not participating in a primary election, exclusive of Sundays and holidays, after filing of objections and shall immediately be certified by the state board to the secretary of state.

(c) All objections to nomination papers other than state and federal candidates shall be considered by the local board in the same manner and with the same effect as provided in subsection (a) of this section for hearing of objections to nomination papers for state and federal candidates by the state board.

SECTION 2. Section 17-15-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 14-15 entitled "Primary Elections" is hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 17-15-1. Date of primaries.

A primary election for the nomination of candidates for each political party shall be held in each voting district in the manner provided in this chapter on the ~~eighth~~ ninth (9th) Tuesday preceding biennial state elections, provided however, that if the ninth (9th) Tuesday is the day after Labor Day, then the primary election shall be held on the next day, the Wednesday.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2028.

DRAFT - Final Version
Reinstating Electronic Mail Ballot Returns for UOCAVA & Voters with Disabilities

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 17-20-6.1 and 17-20-9 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-20 entitled "Mail Ballots" are hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 17-20-6.1. Alternative methods of voting by citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) and other citizens residing outside the United States.

(a) It is the intent and purpose that the provisions set forth in this section are designed to facilitate the federal mandate of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), ~~42 U.S.C. § 1973ff~~ 52 U.S.C. § 20301 et seq.

(b) The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) may be used as a request for an absentee ballot by:

- (1) A member of the armed forces who is absent from the state by reason of being in active service;
- (2) Any person absent from the state in performance of "services intimately connected with military operations" as defined in § 17-20-3(d);
- (3) Any person who is employed outside of the United States as defined in § 17-20-3(c); and
- (4) Any person who does not qualify under subparagraph (1), (2), or (3) above, but who is a citizen of the United States and absent from the state and residing outside the United States as described in chapter 21.1 of this title ~~17~~.

(c) The single FPCA card shall permit the person to request an absentee ballot for each primary and election through the next general election for federal office or for the time period specified by federal law in which the voter is eligible to vote.

(d) The FPCA card must be received by the local board of canvassers where the person last maintains ~~his/her~~ his or her residence for voting purposes within the time frame for applying for absentee ballots as set forth in this title.

(e) If the FPCA, when used in accordance with this section, is sent by the voter through electronic transmission, it must be sent to the secretary of state and it must be received by the secretary of state by the deadline for applying for absentee ballots as set forth in this title. The secretary of state shall then forward the FPCA to the appropriate local authority who shall immediately certify and return the FPCA to the secretary of state with the notation that the corresponding ballots shall be sent by mail and electronic transmission. ~~The secretary of state shall transmit ballots only to the facsimile number provided by the Federal Voter Assistance Program. The secretary of state shall approve electronically transmitted ballots to and from eligible voters only through a service or solution that meets the following requirements:~~

- (1) The system has had one or more independent security reviews;
- (2) Demonstrates the system meets the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework guidelines or federal cybersecurity framework guidelines of a successor designated federal agency or organization; and
- (3) Approved by the secretary of state.

The ballots sent by electronic transmission shall be returned to the state board by electronic transmission. These ballots will be counted at the state board in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the state board.

(f) The voter's signature on the FPCA does not need to be witnessed or notarized, when the FPCA is submitted as provided in this section.

(g) If a voter is casting a mail ballot received through the use of the FPCA card as provided in this section, the voter's signature does not need to be witnessed or notarized on the certifying envelope used for the return of the voted mail ballot.

§ 17-20-9. Application to be placed on the permanent mail ballot application list.

(a) A voter, by signing an application, may request that a mail ballot application be sent to the voter automatically for every election. The application and instructions shall be prescribed by the secretary of state, and furnished upon request to any elector by each local board of canvassers. The envelope containing the mail ballot application shall be clearly marked as not forwardable. If any elector is no longer an eligible voter, the elector shall notify the local board of canvassers of this fact. The local board shall remove the name of any voter from the mailing list established under this section upon receipt of reliable information that a voter no longer qualifies for the service. The voter shall be notified of the action within five (5) days after the board takes the action.

(b) The application and instructions prescribed in this section shall be mailed to the applicant along with a stamped return envelope addressed to the local boards of canvassers. The secretary of state may process applications pursuant to this section through the online mail ballot application portal established by § 17-20-2.3.

(d) The secretary of state shall maintain a list in the central voter registration system of all voters who automatically receive applications for mail ballots, pursuant to this section.

(e) Eligible disabled voters shall be entitled to electronically receive and return their mail ballot, using the same electronic transmission system as that used by voters covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). This electronic process shall satisfy the federal Rehabilitation Act, section 508 concerning accessibility standards.

(f) For purposes of this section, "eligible disabled voter" means a person with disabilities eligible to vote who is incapacitated to such an extent that it would be an undue hardship to vote at the polls because of illness, mental or physical disability, blindness, or a serious impairment of mobility.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

DRAFT - Final Version
Online Nomination Paper Portal Bill

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 17-14-4, 17-14-7, 17-14-8, 17-14-11, 17-14-12 and 17-14-13 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-14 entitled "Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates" is hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 17-14-4. Preparation of nomination papers for candidates — Combination of endorsed candidates — Furnishing of nomination papers to candidates.

(a) Upon receipt of the declarations referred to in § 17-14-1, within two (2) business days of the final date for filing endorsements, the secretary of state for statewide candidates and the local board for general assembly and local candidates shall prepare nomination papers for each person who has filed a declaration of candidacy as provided in § 17-14-1. A minimum of three (3) sets of nomination papers shall be prepared for each candidate whose name appears on nomination papers containing the name of a candidate for general assembly and for local office. Nomination papers for voters from the city of Providence for the offices enumerated in § 17-14-1 shall be furnished by the secretary of state. Nomination papers shall be prepared with the name of the candidate as it appears on the voting list, notwithstanding that the candidate may have signed their declaration of candidacy other than as the candidate's name appears on the voting list. Candidates for nomination for different offices endorsed by the appropriate committee of any party shall be combined on the same nomination papers. The names of candidates for different offices not endorsed by the appropriate committee of any party shall not be combined on the same nomination papers. Nomination papers for candidates for general assembly shall be furnished by the local board of the general assembly candidate. Nomination papers shall be furnished to the local boards by the secretary of state and each shall bear the imprint of the state coat of arms and any additional language required by law. Nomination papers shall be appropriately marked or color coded to indicate the different political parties, the endorsed and unendorsed candidates of those parties, and independent candidates.

(b) Candidates for nomination may, at their own expense, have nomination papers duplicated in exact appearance and as prescribed in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) Nomination papers furnished by the secretary of state shall be personally issued to the candidate, or in the case of combined nomination papers to one of the candidates, for whom they were prepared, or to an individual presenting written authorization from the candidate, or one of the candidates appearing on them, to receive the nomination papers.

(d) During the timeframe prescribed in subsection (a) of this section and pursuant to § 17-14-4.2, the secretary of state may make available an online nomination paper portal for voters to electronically sign nomination papers of the candidate(s) for any office the voter may lawfully vote for at the general election.

§ 17-14-7. Number of signers required for nomination papers and online nomination paper portal.

(a) **United States senator or governor.** The nomination papers of a candidate for the party nomination or an independent candidate for presidential elector, United States senator, or governor shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least one thousand (1,000) voters. Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the 2020 election only, the nomination papers of a candidate for the party nomination or an independent candidate for United States senator shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least five hundred (500) voters.

(b) **Representative in Congress.** The nomination papers of a candidate for the party nomination or an independent candidate for representative in Congress shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least five hundred

(500) voters. Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the 2020 election only, the nomination papers of a candidate for the party nomination or an independent candidate for representative in Congress shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least two hundred fifty (250) voters.

(c) General state offices. The nomination papers of a candidate for the party nomination or an independent candidate for any of the general offices of the state, excluding governor, shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least five hundred (500) voters.

(d) State senator. The nomination papers of a candidate for a party nomination or independent candidate for senator in any senatorial district, shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least one hundred (100) voters of the senatorial district.

(e) State representative. The nomination papers of a candidate for party nomination or an independent candidate for a member of the house of representatives from any representative district shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least fifty (50) voters of the representative district.

(f) City offices. The nomination papers of a candidate for party nomination or an independent candidate for any local office to be filled by the voters of any city at large shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least two hundred (200) voters of the city, provided that in the city of Newport, for at-large candidates or candidates for school committee, at least one hundred (100) signatures shall be required; provided, further, that in the city of Woonsocket, for candidates for citywide nonpartisan office, including city council, mayor, and candidates for school committee, if elected, at least one hundred (100) signatures shall be required; and provided, further that in the city of Providence, at least five hundred (500) signatures shall be required.

(g) Voting district moderator or clerk. The nomination papers for a candidate for voting district moderator or clerk in any town shall be signed, in the aggregate, by at least ten (10) voters of the voting district.

(h) Other offices. The nomination papers of a candidate for party nomination for other offices covered by § 17-15-7, or for the election of delegates or for unendorsed party committee candidates, shall be signed, in the aggregate, by fifty (50) voters.

(i) Electronic signatures via an online nomination paper portal pursuant to § 17-14-4.2(a) shall count towards a candidate's aggregate total signatures as prescribed in subsections (a)-(h) of this section.

§ 17-14-8. Signing of nomination papers and electronic signature(s) in an online nomination paper portal.

Not all endorsers of a candidate need sign on the same nomination papers, but endorsers who are voters in different cities and towns shall not sign the same sheet. Every voter signing a nomination paper shall sign in person with his or her name, place of residence, and street number, as it appears on the voting list. The signature shall be accepted as valid if it can be reasonably identified to be the signature of the voter it purports to be. A variation of the voter's signature by the insertion or omission of identifying titles or by the substitution of initials for the first or middle names, or both, shall not in itself be grounds for invalidation of the signature. Any voter who is unable to write may sign by making his or her mark "X" on the nomination paper in the presence of two (2) witnesses who shall subscribe their names on the paper as witnesses to the signing. **For voters who electronically sign nomination papers using an online nomination paper portal, the voter's electronic signature shall be accepted if the voter meets all of the requirements prescribed by § 17-14-4.2(d).**

§ 17-14-11. Checking and certification of nomination papers — Challenge.

(a) Each nomination paper **including those on an online nomination paper portal** for party and independent candidates shall be submitted before four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the sixtieth (60th) day before the primary to the local board of the city or town where the signers appear to be voters or, in the case of special elections for state

and local office, on the twenty-eighth (28th) day before the primary, or in the case of special elections for federal office, on the fifty-third (53rd) day before the primary. Nomination papers including those on an online nomination paper portal for independent presidential candidates and presidential candidates of political parties, other than those defined in § 17-1-2(9), shall be filed not later than sixty (60) days prior to the general election. Each local board shall immediately proceed to check signatures on each nomination paper filed with it and each electronic signature submitted via an online nomination paper portal against the voting list as last canvassed or published according to law.

(b) The local boards shall certify a sufficient number of names appearing on the nomination papers and via an online nomination paper portal that are in conformity with the requirements of § 17-14-8 to qualify the candidate for a position on the ballot, and after considering any challenge under this section and, if necessary, certifying any additional valid names, shall immediately file nomination papers for statewide office, general assembly, and state and district committee candidates with the secretary of state; provided, that nomination papers for local candidates shall be retained by the local board.

(c) If any candidate or an individual presenting written authorization from the candidate, or the chairperson of any party committee questions the validity or authenticity of any signature on the nomination paper or electronic signature via an online nomination paper portal, the local board shall immediately and summarily decide the question, and for this purpose, shall have the same powers as are conferred upon the board by the provisions of § 17-14-14.

(d) If any challenged signature or electronic signature is found to be invalid, for any reason in law, or forged, then the signature or electronic signature shall not be counted.

(e) The local canvassing clerk shall immediately notify the state board in writing and via electronic mail if the local canvassing clerk suspects a consistent pattern of forgery as prescribed by § 17-23-17 on the nomination papers or in an online nomination paper portal of a local, state, or federal candidate.

(1) The state board, upon notification of allegations of any consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures on nomination papers or electronic signatures via an online nomination paper portal of a local, state, or federal candidate, shall review the allegations and, if determined to be with reasonable cause, shall, as soon as feasible notify all corresponding local canvassing clerks of the allegations of suspected forgery.

(2) The state board, if it deems necessary, shall order a review of all nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include a consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection. The state board, if it deems necessary, may order a review of all electronic signatures via an online nomination paper portal. The state board, in consultation with the Elections Committee of the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association, shall promulgate rules and regulations on the process to review nomination papers of a local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include a consistent pattern of suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection.

(3) The state board shall explicitly determine and deliver, in writing and via electronic mail to the secretary of state, the findings of the review of the local, state, or federal candidate whose nomination papers include suspected forged signatures as prescribed in this subsection, and whether the determination affects a candidate's qualification for a position on the ballot.

§ 17-14-12. Filing of nomination papers.

All nomination papers including those nomination papers on an online nomination paper portal for state offices or officers and all certified lists of candidates for local offices or officers shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state (the certified lists by the respective local boards), not later than fifty-four (54) days before the

date of the primary held to nominate candidates for general election; but when there is a primary to nominate candidates for any office mentioned in § 17-15-7 to be voted upon at a special election for state and local office, all nomination papers and lists of local candidates shall be filed in the office on or before the twenty-sixth (26th) day preceding the day of the special primary election, or when there is a primary to nominate candidates for any office listed in § 17-15-7 to be voted upon at a special election for federal office, all nomination papers and lists of local candidates shall be filed in the office on or before the forty-ninth (49th) day preceding the day of the special primary election. Nomination papers including those nomination papers on an online nomination paper portal for independent presidential candidates and presidential candidates of political parties other than those defined in § 17-1-2(9) shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state by the local boards of canvassers not later than fifty-four (54) days before the date of the election.

§ 17-14-13. Objections to eligibility of candidate or sufficiency of papers

When nomination papers including those nomination papers on an online nomination paper portal have been duly filed and are in apparent conformity with § 17-14-11, they shall be conclusively presumed to be valid, unless written objections to them are made as to the eligibility of the candidate or the sufficiency of the nomination papers or the signatures including electronic signatures on them. All objections shall be filed in the office of the secretary of state or of the local board, as the case may be, by four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the next business day after the last day fixed for filing nomination papers in the appropriate office as provided in this chapter. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the secretary of state or the local board, as the case may be, from disqualifying a candidate based on the determination of the secretary of state or the local board, acting on its own motion, that the candidate is ineligible or the nomination papers or the signatures, including electronic signatures, on them are invalid or insufficient.

SECTION 2. Chapter 17-14 of the General Laws entitled "Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following sections:

§ 17-14-4.2. Online nomination paper portal.

(a) In addition to any other available means of signing nomination papers, the secretary of state may establish and maintain an online nomination paper portal through which voters may electronically sign nomination papers of the candidate(s) for any office the voter may lawfully vote for at the general election.

(b) Once established, the online nomination paper portal would provide voters the ability to electronically sign the nomination papers for candidates for any office the voter may lawfully vote for at the general election. An electronic signature shall be considered the same as the voter's signature on a nomination paper as prescribed in this chapter.

(c) A voter's electronic signature shall be considered submitted on the calendar date and time the authorization is initially transmitted by the voter through an online nomination paper portal.

(d) Once established, a voter may electronically sign a candidate's nomination paper through an online nomination paper portal when the voter:

(1) Provides the voter's first name, last name, date-of-birth, and zip code to access an online nomination paper portal;

(2) Verifies the voter's identity through an online nomination paper portal by providing the voter's valid Rhode Island driver's license number or Rhode Island state identification number;

(3) Selects the intended candidate's name using an online nomination paper portal as prescribed in this section; and

(4) Affirms, subject to penalty of perjury, that the information the voter has provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief.

(e) To ensure full, equal, and independent access to all voters with disabilities, an online nomination paper portal shall comply, at minimum, with all requirements under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C §§ 12131-12165, and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 compliance level AA.

(f) The online nomination paper portal may be fully implemented for the nomination paper process for the 2028 presidential preference primary and all subsequent elections thereafter. This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit the secretary of state from implementing an online nomination paper process for any special election that occurs prior to the 2028 presidential preference primary.

(g) No existing state funds or appropriation of state funds shall be used for the establishment of the online nomination paper portal, provided, however, the secretary of state is authorized to utilize federal funds and/or grant funding for the establishment of an online nomination paper portal.

(h) The secretary of state may promulgate rules and regulations to establish, implement, and maintain an online nomination paper portal as prescribed in this section.

§ 17-14-9.1 Application of electronic signature(s) via an online nomination paper portal.

Once established, a voter may electronically sign the nomination paper through an online nomination paper portal for any number of candidate(s) for any office the voter may lawfully vote for at the general election.

§ 17-4-10.1 Voter attestation when using an online nomination paper portal.

Once established, voters using an online nomination paper portal shall affirm, subject to penalty of perjury, that the information the voter has provided via an online nomination paper portal is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. Voters using an online nomination paper portal shall meet all of the requirements prescribed by § 17-14-4.2(d).

SECTION 3. Section 17-23-17 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-23 entitled "Election Offenses" is hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 17-23-17. Violations with respect to elections.

(a) Any person is guilty of a felony who:

(1) Makes a declaration of candidacy or obtains, circulates, or causes to be circulated his or her nomination papers for an office, knowing or with good reason to know that he or she is not qualified as provided in this title to be his or her party's candidate for the office;

(2) Knowingly or without reasonable and proper investigation makes any substantial misstatement in any declaration of candidacy, nomination paper, or affidavit provided for in this title;

(3) Signs a nomination paper when he or she knows that he or she is not qualified to sign;

(4) Votes or attempts to vote at any election when he or she knows or should know that he or she is not qualified to vote;

(5) Votes or attempts to vote more than once at any election, or votes or attempts to vote in more than one political party's primary on the same day;

(6) Votes or attempts to vote at any election under the name of any other person;

(7) Willfully hinders the orderly conduct of any election;

(8) Gives a false answer to any election official relative to his or her right to vote at the election;

(9) Aids or abets a person not entitled to vote at any election in voting or attempting to vote under a name other than the voter's name or in voting twice upon the voter's name;

(10) Willfully alters or makes any change, erasure, or additional check upon the voting list used or to be used at any election; or

(11) Willfully violates any provisions of chapters 12 — 15 of this title for which violation a specific penalty is not provided.

(b) Any person who unlawfully and knowingly signs the name of any other person on any nomination papers shall be guilty of a felony.

(c) Any public officer or officer of a political party who willfully violates any of the provisions of chapters 12 — 15 of this title, or refuses or willfully neglects and omits to perform, in the manner and within the time prescribed, any duty imposed upon the officer by these chapters, or suffers or permits any alteration, erasure, or additional check to be made upon a voting list in the officer's custody or control, shall be guilty of a felony.

(d) For purposes of this chapter, "online nomination paper portal" shall also be construed to mean a "nomination paper" as prescribed in § 17-14-4.2.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

AN ACT

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES

Introduced By:

Date Introduced:

Referred To:

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Sections 17-8-1, 17-8-2 and 17-8-5 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-8 entitled "Local Canvassing Authorities" are hereby amended to read as follows:

17-8-1. Appointment of bipartisan authority.

(a) The legislative body of each city and town shall appoint a bipartisan canvassing authority of three (3) qualified electors of the city or town, not more than two (2) of whom shall belong to the same political party, and may appoint two (2) alternate members, not more than one of whom shall belong to the same political party. At any meeting of the canvassing authority at which a member is to be absent, the member may request that an alternate replace him or her for that meeting; provided, that the alternate member must be of the same political party as the member. The mayor, in cities and towns that elect a mayor, or the president of the town council, in cities and towns with no elected mayor, shall, within thirty (30) days of receipt of lists, nominate the members

29 of the canvassing authority from lists of party voters submitted by the respective chairpersons of
30 the city or town political committee, which lists shall contain the names of five (5) times the number
31 of persons to be appointed. If the legislative body refuses to approve the nomination of any person
32 to the canvassing authority, the mayor or the president shall submit to the legislative body, within
33 thirty (30) days of the refusal, another person named on one of the lists, and so on until a person is
34 appointed. If the chairperson of the city or town committee of a political party entitled to an
35 appointment fails or refuses to submit a list, within thirty (30) days of notice of a vacancy, the
36 mayor or the council president, as the case may be, shall nominate any party voter of the political
37 party entitled to the appointment.

38 (b) In any instance in which a vacancy occurs and the remaining two (2) members of
39 the canvassing authority each belong to different political parties, the respective chairpersons of
40 any recognized city or town political party committee that has duly filed a biennial organization
41 with the canvassing authority, in accordance with § 17-12-9, shall each be entitled to submit a list,
42 and the mayor or the council president, as the case may be, shall nominate any party voter from any
43 of the submitted lists, in accordance with the procedures of subsection (a) of this section.

44 17-8-2. Term and qualifications for office.

45 (a) Each member of a local canvassing authority shall be appointed to serve for a term
46 of six (6) years beginning on the first Monday of March succeeding the date of his or her
47 appointment and until his or her successor is elected and qualified. No person shall be appointed or
48 serve as a member of the authority who is an officer or employee of the United States or of this
49 state, or who is an officer or employee of the authority's city or town; provided, that in any city a
50 member of the authority may be employed as its clerk. Any member of the authority who becomes
51 a candidate for election to any public office and who fails to file a declination of the candidacy
52 within the time allowed by law shall be disqualified from holding membership upon the authority
53 and his or her successor shall be immediately elected.

54 **(b) ; The fixed six (6) year terms of members of a local canvassing authority, shall**
55 **expire on a staggered basis on the first Monday of March in odd-numbered years; provided that**
56 **not more than one member's term, shall expire in any odd-numbered year. If the term expiration**
57 **dates on record for any canvassing authority members are found to be in noncompliance with the**
58 **provisions of this section, the town or city clerk shall immediately correct them.**

59 **(c) The fixed six (6) year terms of alternates of a local canvassing authority shall expire**
60 **on the first Monday of March in any odd-numbered year.**

61 **17-8-5. Local boards — Powers and duties — Quorum.**

62 (a) Each canvassing authority shall have and exercise the functions, powers, and duties
63 provided for local boards by this title or by any law not inconsistent with this title. It shall:

64 (1) Select one of its members as presiding officer and another as clerk of the board;
65 provided, that nothing in this title shall be deemed to affect the powers and duties of the town clerk
66 who shall be ex officio the clerk of the respective town canvassing authorities; and provided,
67 further, that in the cities of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Newport, Woonsocket, Cranston, and
68 Warwick, the clerk shall be designated at the time of his or her election or appointment;

69 (2) Have and discharge all of the functions, powers, and duties of the town council
70 concerning nominations, elections, registration of voters and canvassing rights, the preparing and
71 correcting of voting lists, and other related matters, which powers are transferred to the local board;

72 (3) Make or furnish all returns or other things required by law to be made or furnished
73 to or by city clerks, boards of canvassers, and district clerks, relative to any matter within the
74 purview of this title;

75 (4) Appoint and employ all its necessary clerical and technical assistants and fix the
76 compensation of each person appointed, within the limits of funds available to it pursuant to law;
77 provided, that in the cities of Cranston and Woonsocket and the town of Coventry the employment
78 and compensation shall be subject to the approval of the respective city or town councils ;

79 (5) The town or city clerk, or designee, in municipalities where the town or city clerk
80 is by law, charter, or ordinance charged with the functions of election administration, shall be the
81 chief local election official, primary administrative contact, and liaison from the canvassing
82 authority and local board to the secretary of state and to the state board of elections, except in towns
83 and cities where an election office, separate from the town or city clerk, is charged with election
84 administration, said chief local election official shall be designated by the local board and shall
85 hold the same duties. The chief local election official, upon taking office as city or town clerk, or
86 upon designation by the local board, as the case may be, shall designate an alternate local election
87 official, and shall at all times provide and maintain emergency contact information for, at minimum,
88 the chief local election official, the alternate local election official, and the chairperson of the board
89 of canvassers on file with the secretary of state and state board of elections; and

90 (6) The chief local election official shall, under the direction of the local board, have
91 the authority to coordinate with the secretary of state to add, modify, or revoke access to the
92 statewide central voter register for any system users in the municipality, who require it in order to
93 carry out the duties imposed on the canvassing authority by this title.

94 (b) A quorum of a local board for the purpose of receiving registrations shall be comprised
95 of one member of the board, and for all other purposes a quorum shall be comprised of two (2)
96 members.

97 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION

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OF

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AN ACT

108

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES

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This act would require the respective party chairpersons to submit lists of party voters to the mayor or council president, as the case may be, within thirty (30) days of notice of vacancy, in a municipal election office and would require the mayor or council president to make a nomination for a replacement to the council within thirty (30) days of receipt of the lists. It would also clarify the term expiration dates for canvassing authority members and alternates, and would direct the city or town clerk to make immediate corrections if the term expiration dates on record are found to be in noncompliance with the provisions of this act. The act would require the local canvassing board to designate a chief local election official, and for that designee to designate an alternate local election official. It would further establish that the chief local election official is the only agent authorized to request user access to the statewide central voter register via the secretary of state.

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This act would take effect on January 1, 2027.

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2026 --

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

Introduced By:

Date Introduced:

Referred To:

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 17-8-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-8 entitled "Local Canvassing Authorities" is hereby amended to read as follows:

17-8-10. Publication of local questions to be submitted to voters.

(a) At least twenty-five (25) days pPrior to each local election at which public questions are to be submitted, the local board shall cause to be prominently posted in at least three (3) local public locations and advertised at least once in a newspaper of local circulation, ~~or in lieu of the requirement to place the advertisement in a newspaper of local circulation, the City of Pawtucket may mail to the household of each registered voter prior to the election~~ the full text of each legislative act to be acted upon and the election date, or the local board may substitute a description of the text of each act in lieu of the full text, together with the following information:

(1) The designated number of the question;

(2) A brief caption of the question;

(3) A brief explanation of the measure that is the subject matter of the question; and

(4) A notice that voter fraud is a felony and the penalty for voter fraud. This notice shall be in conspicuous lettering and shall contain the following language: "You must be registered to vote from your actual place of residence."

(b) If the public question involves the issuance of bonds or other evidence of indebtedness or any other long-term financial obligation such as a lease, the notice required by subsection (a) of this section shall also include at least the following information to be provided:

(1) The estimated total cost of the project or program, including financing (using a reasonable assumed rate of interest), legal, and other costs.

(2) The estimated useful life of the project, and the term of the bonds, other indebtedness, or other obligation.

(3) A reasonably detailed description of the project or program, its purposes, and a project timetable.

(c) The local board shall additionally publish a conspicuous and prominent notice containing all of the same information on the municipality's website for at least twenty-five (25) consecutive days leading up to and including the date of the election where the local question(s) are certified to appear on the ballot. Said notice shall reasonably comply with the most recent, commonly adopted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which shall be no less than 2.0 compliance level AA.

(d) The local board may, at its discretion, substitute the newspaper advertising requirements listed in subsection (a) of this section by mailing a notice containing all of the same information to each voter household in the applicable election jurisdiction, in addition to prominently posting the same in at least three (3) local public locations.

SECTION 2. Chapter 17-8 of the General Laws entitled "Local Canvassing Authorities" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

17-8-11. Publication of early voting dates, hours, and location.

(a) The local board shall advertise the dates, hours, and location of early voting in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town at least once prior to the commencement of any in-person early voting period to be conducted by the local board, and at least once while that same early voting period is underway.

(b) The local board shall publish a conspicuous and prominent notice on the municipality's website of the dates, hours, and location of early voting, and said notice shall remain published throughout the duration of any in-person early voting period conducted by the local board. Said notice shall reasonably comply with the most recent, commonly adopted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which shall be no less than 2.0 compliance level AA.

SECTION 3. Section 17-9.1-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1 entitled "Registration of Voters" is hereby amended to read as follows:

17-9.1-3. Periods when boards receive registrations.

(a) The local boards shall open their respective offices for the purposes of receiving registrations of voters throughout the year during their regular business hours. Registration for any election shall close on the thirtieth (30th) day preceding an election; ~~provided, that local boards shall not receive the registration on Sundays or legal holidays, and may receive the registrations during additional hours each day from the fortieth (40th) to the thirtieth (30th) day before any election.~~ Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as restricting the right of local boards, statewide or local registration agents, or members of the general assembly to accept registrations of voters on any day or at any time. The acceptance of registrations at any other time shall not affect the validity of any election.

(b) Notwithstanding any other sections of the general laws to the contrary, all local boards of canvassers shall remain open from eight-thirty (8:30) a.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the last day prescribed by law for the ~~taking receiving~~ of voter registrations to permit participation of the voters in the next succeeding election. In the event that the last day prescribed by law for the ~~taking receiving~~ of voter registrations is a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, then the local board may:

(1) Designate one publicly accessible location in the city or town at which voter registrations will be ~~taken~~ received; and

(2) Designate the hours during which voter registrations will be ~~taken~~ received at that location, which hours shall include the hours from one o'clock (1:00) p.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m.

(c) If a local board does designate a location other than its regular place of business or does designate hours other than eight-thirty o'clock (8:30) a.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m., it shall:

(1) ~~Publicly-announce~~ Prominently post in at least three (3) local public locations those designation(s) at least ten (10) days prior to the last day provided by law for the ~~taking~~ receiving of voter registrations; and

(2) Advertise those designation(s) in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town at least twice prior to the last day prescribed by law for the ~~taking~~ receiving of voter registrations. The local board may substitute advertising in a newspaper by posting a conspicuous and prominent notice of those designation(s) on the municipality's website for at least ten (10) consecutive days leading up to and including the last day prescribed by law for the receiving of voter registrations for any election. Said notice shall reasonably comply with the most recent, commonly adopted Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which shall be no less than 2.0 compliance level AA.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

EXPLANATION
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

This act would require the local board to publish early voting dates, hours, and location at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or town, and to publish the same on the municipality's website for the duration of the in-person early voting period.

This act would permit the substitution of advertising the voter registration deadline in a newspaper by posting notice of designation(s) on the municipality's website, continuously, for at least ten (10) consecutive days leading up to the last day prescribed by law for the receiving of voter registrations.

This act would require the local board to publish local ballot questions on its website for 25 consecutive days, and to authorize the substitution of newspaper advertisements if a jurisdiction-wide household mailing containing the same information is instead sent.

This act would take effect upon passage.

17-15-1. Date of primaries.

A primary election for the nomination of candidates for each political party shall be held in each voting district in the manner provided in this chapter on the eighth Tuesday preceding biennial state elections. **Provided, however, that if the eighth Tuesday is the day after Labor Day, then the primary election shall be held on the next day, the Wednesday, and in such an occurrence the dates for the primary candidate nomination, challenge, objection, hearing, withdrawal, vacancy, and certification processes established by §§ 17-14-11, 17-14-12, 17-15-38, and 17-19-7, including any ensuing statutory deadlines tied to those dates, shall be calculated as if the primary election were still held on the Tuesday.**

DRAFT

2025 -- H 5516 SUBSTITUTE A AS AMENDED

LC001144/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CONDUCT OF ELECTION AND VOTING EQUIPMENT,
AND SUPPLIES

Introduced By: Representatives Baginski, Paplauskas, and Lima

Date Introduced: February 13, 2025

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-19-31 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-19 entitled "Conduct of
2 Election and Voting Equipment, and Supplies" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 17-19-31. Irregular ballots.

4 Ballots voted for any person whose name does not appear on the ballot as a nominated
5 candidate for office are referred to in this section as "irregular ballots." In voting for presidential
6 electors, a voter may vote an irregular ticket made up of the names of persons in nomination by
7 different parties; or partly of names of persons in nomination and partly of names of persons not in
8 nomination; or wholly of names of persons not in nomination by any party. Scanned images of the
9 computer ballot containing the irregular ballot shall be stored digitally on physical electronic media
10 in the optical-scan precinct-count unit and published on the state board website. With that
11 exception, no irregular ballot shall be voted for any person for any office whose name appears on
12 the ballot as a nominated candidate for that office; any irregular ballot so voted shall not be counted.
13 An irregular ballot must be cast in its appropriate place on the ballot, or it shall be void and not
14 counted and no irregular ballots shall be counted at primaries; provided, that at any presidential
15 primary, irregular ballots shall be counted for those persons whose names have been written in for
16 the office of president. At the close of the polls, irregular ballots shall be packaged according to §
17 17-19-33 and shall be immediately delivered to the local board of canvassers. The local board shall
18 receive the tape from the optical precinct-count unit containing printed images of each written name

1 on the irregular ballots, or the physical electronic media containing images of the irregular ballots
2 ~~and record~~ containing all write-in votes cast for all federal, state, and local races listed on the tape.
3 If the total number of write-in votes cast, may affect the election outcome for a particular office,
4 including whenever the total number of write-in ballots cast falls within the margins of a valid
5 recount request for that office, the local board shall adjudicate each individual write-in vote cast
6 for that office and report the total qualified write-in votes cast to the state board. The state board
7 shall notify the applicable local board(s) when the total write-in votes cast in any contest, may
8 affect the election outcome for any particular office. The local board shall notify the state board of
9 the results through a procedure promulgated by the state board. A write-in candidate, who has filed
10 required campaign finance reports with the state board, or who has neither accepted contributions,
11 nor made aggregate expenditures in excess of the amounts for which a filing exemption would be
12 available to other candidates under § 17-25-11(e), is entitled to an adjudication of the write-in votes
13 cast in their contest, regardless of the total write-in votes cast in that contest, through a procedure
14 promulgated by rules and regulations of the state board. The rules shall be promulgated in
15 accordance with the rulemaking provisions of chapter 35 of title 42 ("administrative procedures"),
16 notwithstanding the provisions of § 42-35-18(b)(7), except where urgently necessary to address a
17 time sensitive issue.

18 SECTION 2. Section 17-22-7 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-22 entitled "Tabulation
19 and Certification of Returns by State Board" is hereby amended to read as follows:

20 **17-22-7. Books of record of votes — Contents.**

21 (a) The board shall keep separate books of record of the votes cast for the different classes
22 of officers which it is its duty to count, canvass, and tabulate, as follows:

23 (1) A book of record of votes cast for electors of president and vice-president;

24 (2) A book of record of votes cast for senators and representatives in congress;

25 (3) A book of record of votes cast for general officers; and

26 (4) A book of record of the votes cast for each class of officers that may by law
27 subsequently be required to be counted, canvassed, and tabulated by the board.

28 (b) Each of the respective books shall contain:

29 (1) A record of the number of votes cast in each voting district for each candidate according
30 to the counting, canvassing, and tabulating of the board;

31 (2) The number cast in each voting district for each candidate according to the certificates
32 of the moderators or wardens and clerks;

33 (3) The total number cast for each candidate in each town and city according to the counting
34 and to the certificates;

1 (4) The total number cast for each candidate in the state or congressional district, as the
2 case may be, according to the counting and the certificates;

3 (5) A statement of which candidates are elected; and

4 (6) Any other pertinent facts that the board deems proper.

5 (c) The board shall also keep a book of record of the votes cast for and against any
6 proposition of amendment of the Constitution and a book of record of the votes cast for and against
7 all questions submitted to the electors of the state, with like detail as provided in this section in
8 relation to votes cast for officers.

9 (d) Notwithstanding the above, the state board shall ~~report~~ publish on its website images
10 of all write-in votes cast for each particular office, regardless of candidate eligibility and regardless
11 of whether it may affect the outcome, and shall report all write-in votes adjudicated by the local
12 board in accordance with § 17-19-31, received by persons, not otherwise qualifying to appear on
13 ~~the ballot and receiving less than five (5) votes in a race, as a composite total of all write-in votes~~
14 ~~cast for said office~~ and shall also publish the overall total number of write-in votes cast for and with
15 each particular office.

16 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect upon passage.

LC001144/SUB A

EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CONDUCT OF ELECTION AND VOTING EQUIPMENT,
AND SUPPLIES

1 This act would require all write-in votes, regardless of qualification, to be reported and
2 published by the state board of elections, on its website. It would also require the local board of
3 canvassers to adjudicate write-in votes in any contest, where the total number of write-in votes cast
4 may affect the outcome.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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LC001144/SUB A
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Title 17 Elections

Chapter 20 Mail Ballots

R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-23

§ 17-20-23. Marking and certification of ballot.

- (a) A voter may vote for the candidates of the voter's choice by making a mark in the space provided opposite their respective names.
- (b) In case a voter desires to vote upon a question submitted to the vote of the electors of the state, the voter shall mark in the appropriate space associated with the answer that the voter desires to give.
- (c) The voter shall enclose and seal the ballot in the envelope provided for it. The voter shall then enclose and seal the certified envelope with the ballot in the envelope addressed to the state board and cause the envelope to be delivered to the state board on or before election day.
- (d) These ballots shall be counted only if received within the time limited by this chapter.
- (e) A voter who receives the ballot by mail may return it via the United States Postal Service, deposited into an official elections drop box, or delivered to a local board of canvassers, the state board of elections, the secretary of state, or, if applicable, a polling place during the early voting period or on election day by the voter or a person deemed authorized by the voter that is not affiliated with a candidate for office or a political campaign.
- (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (e), a ballot may be returned by an immediate family member or member of the voter's household, even if that immediate family member or member of the household is a candidate for office or someone affiliated with a political campaign.
- (g) No person affiliated with a candidate for office or a political campaign shall possess a voter's mail ballot other than their own, except if the person is an immediate family member or lives in the same household as the voter, the staff of the State Board of Elections, staff of the canvassing authority of the city or town in which the voter is registered, the staff of the Secretary of State, any official printer of mail ballot forms and its designated carriers, the United States Postal Service, any other carrier, courier or messenger service recognized and approved by the State Board of Elections, or any person authorized by the State Board of Elections to receive and process official mail ballot forms and envelopes, including members of the State Board of Elections and local board of canvassers members.
- (h) No person affiliated with a candidate for office or a political campaign shall be knowingly present when a voter executes their mail ballot, unless the person is an immediate family member or lives in the same household as the voter, or is authorized by law to be present, when the mail ballot is executed in the office of the canvassing authority of the city or town in which the voter is registered or the State Board of Elections or those appointed as provided in § 17-20-14.
- (i) No person can return mail ballots on behalf of more than ten (10) voters in any election, unless that person is designated to do so or authorized by the state board.
- (j) For purposes of this subsections, immediate family member means a parent, grandparent, sibling, spouse, partner, child, or grandchild by blood, marriage, or adoption.
- (k) Any reference to "mail ballot" or "ballot by mail" in in this section shall be construed to also apply to an emergency mail ballot as provided for in § 17-20-2.2.

~~(e)~~ (k) There shall be a space provided on the general election ballot to allow the voter to write in the names of persons not in nomination by any party as provided for in §§ 17-19-31 and 17-20- 24.

(l) A person who knowingly and willfully violates the provisions of section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to the penalties provided for in § 17-26-2.

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