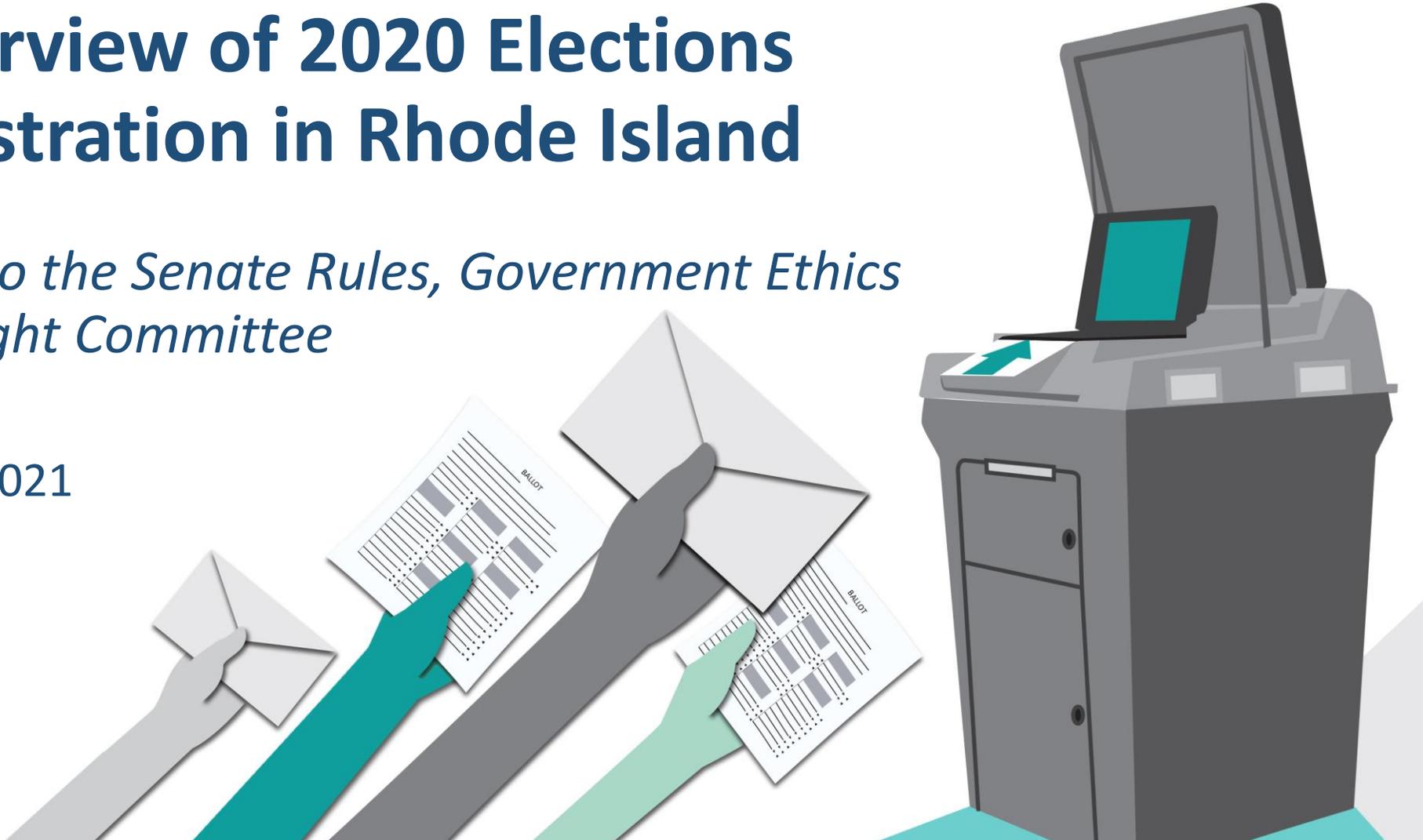


An Overview of 2020 Elections Administration in Rhode Island

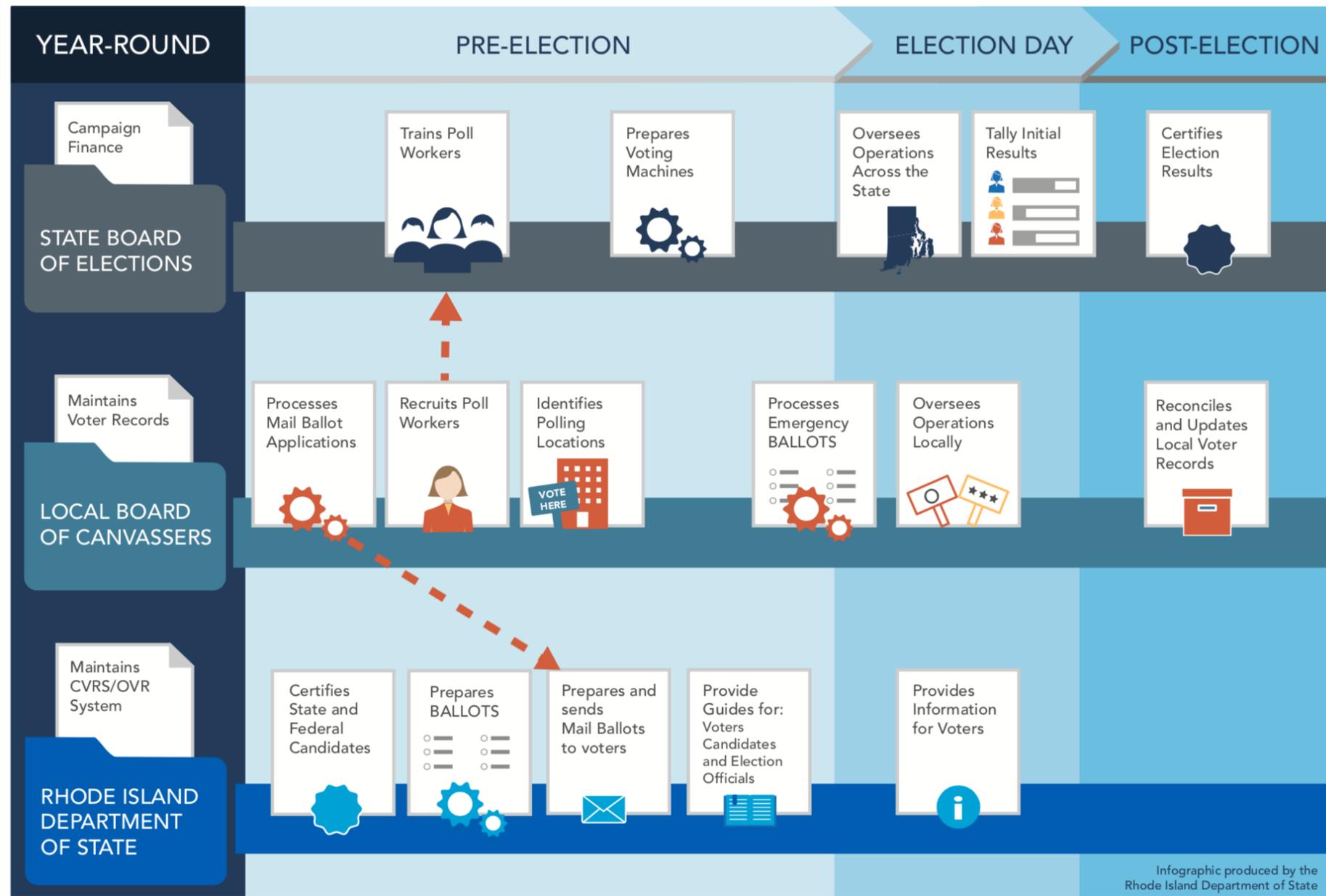
Presented to the Senate Rules, Government Ethics and Oversight Committee

February 1, 2021



Nellie M. Gorbea
Secretary of State

How Elections Work in Rhode Island



Infographic available at vote.ri.gov

Infographic produced by the Rhode Island Department of State

Presidential Primary – June 2

- Executive Order to change date from April 28 to June 2 and hold a predominantly mail ballot election
- All (active and inactive) registered voters were sent mail ballot applications with postage-paid return envelopes
- Fewer polling places open on Election Day
- Two witnesses or notary on mail ballot envelopes was waived
- Board of Elections received mail ballot applications and prepped for processing by local boards of canvassers

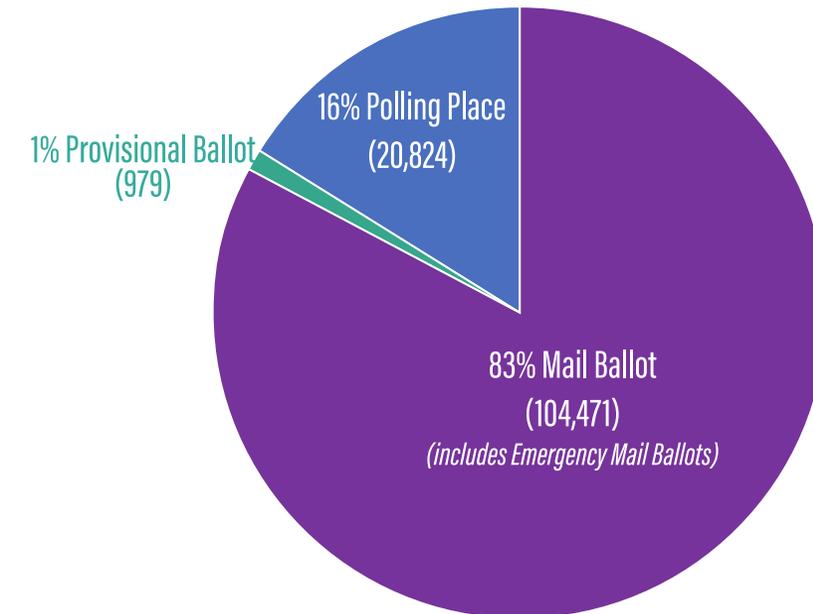


Presidential Primary – June 2

What Worked Well

- Overwhelming number of Rhode Islanders chose to safely vote from home
 - Applications sent to all registered voters reduced technology barriers, helped voter list maintenance
 - Removing the two witnesses/notary signature requirement on ballot envelopes made it easier for older Rhode Islanders and those living alone
- Successfully flattened the curve of in-person voting
 - Polling place operations were smooth
 - Decreased number of in-person voters allowed for social distancing best practices

**2020 Presidential Primary
Voting Methods**



Presidential Primary – June 2

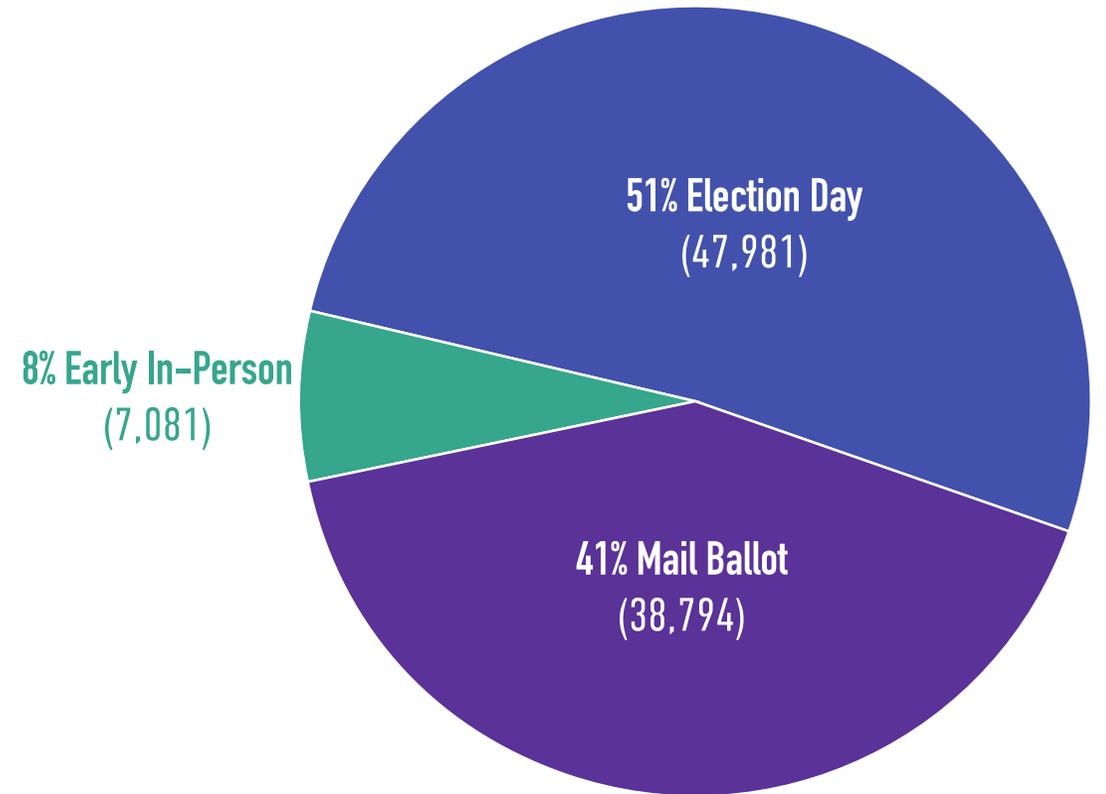
Lessons Learned

- Capacity for locals to process high volume of mail ballot applications
- Timeframe for sending out mail ballots to voters
- More detailed ballot tracking
- Emergency mail ballot processing
- Polling place operations
- Voter education



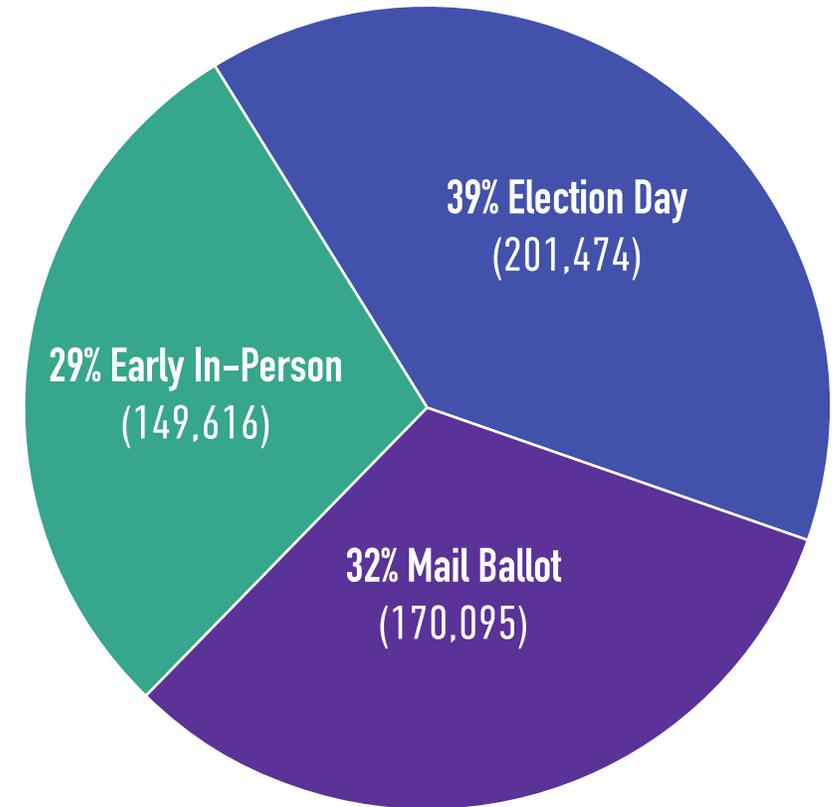
Statewide Primary – September 8

- Early in-person voting implemented
- Supreme Court decision maintains waiver of two witnesses or notary requirement for mail ballot envelopes
- Postcards mailed to households with information about three voting options

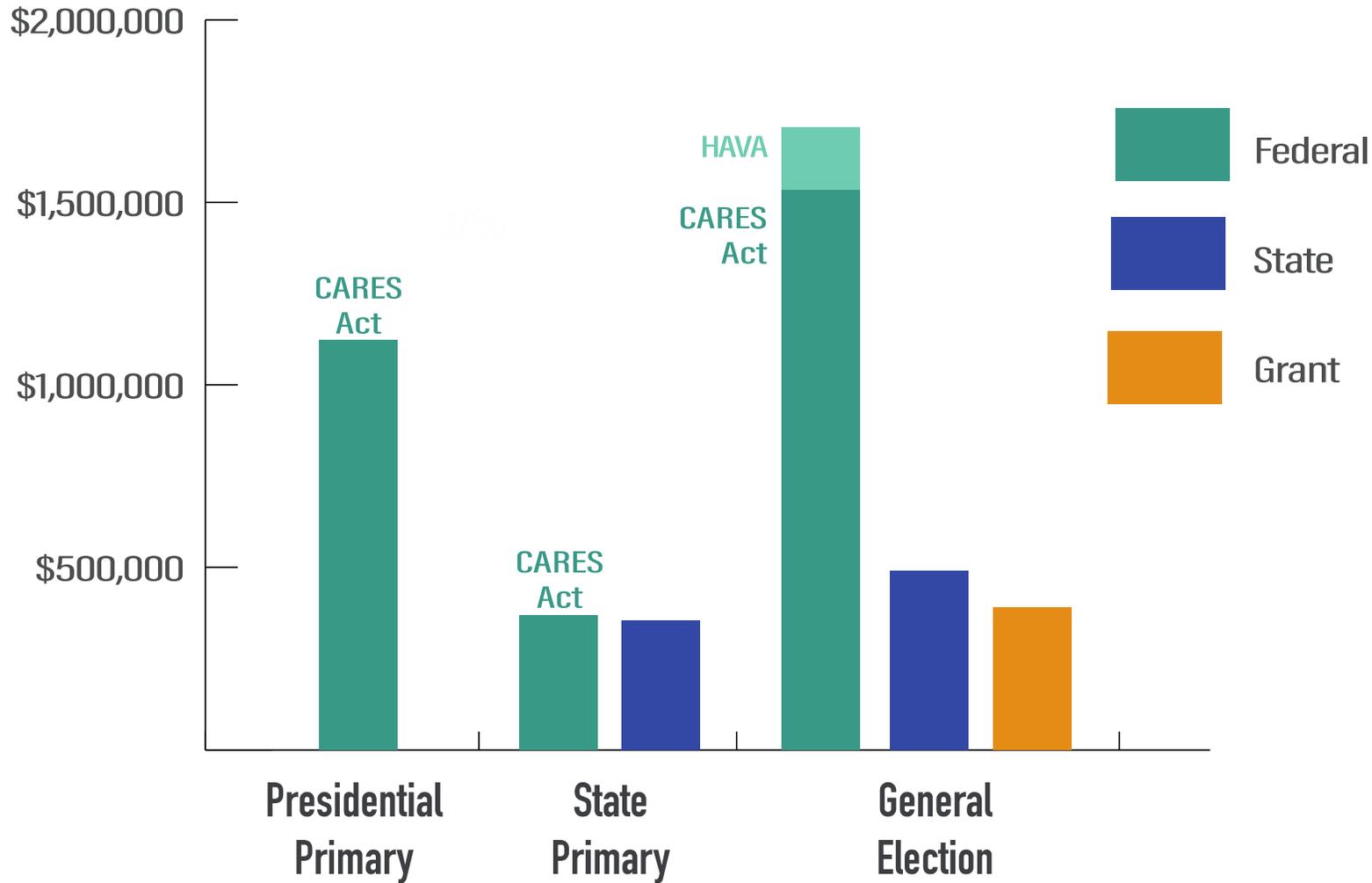


General Election – November 3

- Early in-person voting
- Centralized processing of mail ballot applications by RI Department of State with assistance of RI National Guard
- All active registered voters were sent mail ballot applications with postage-paid return envelopes
- 24-7 Secure drop boxes offered safe and convenient option for returning mail ballots



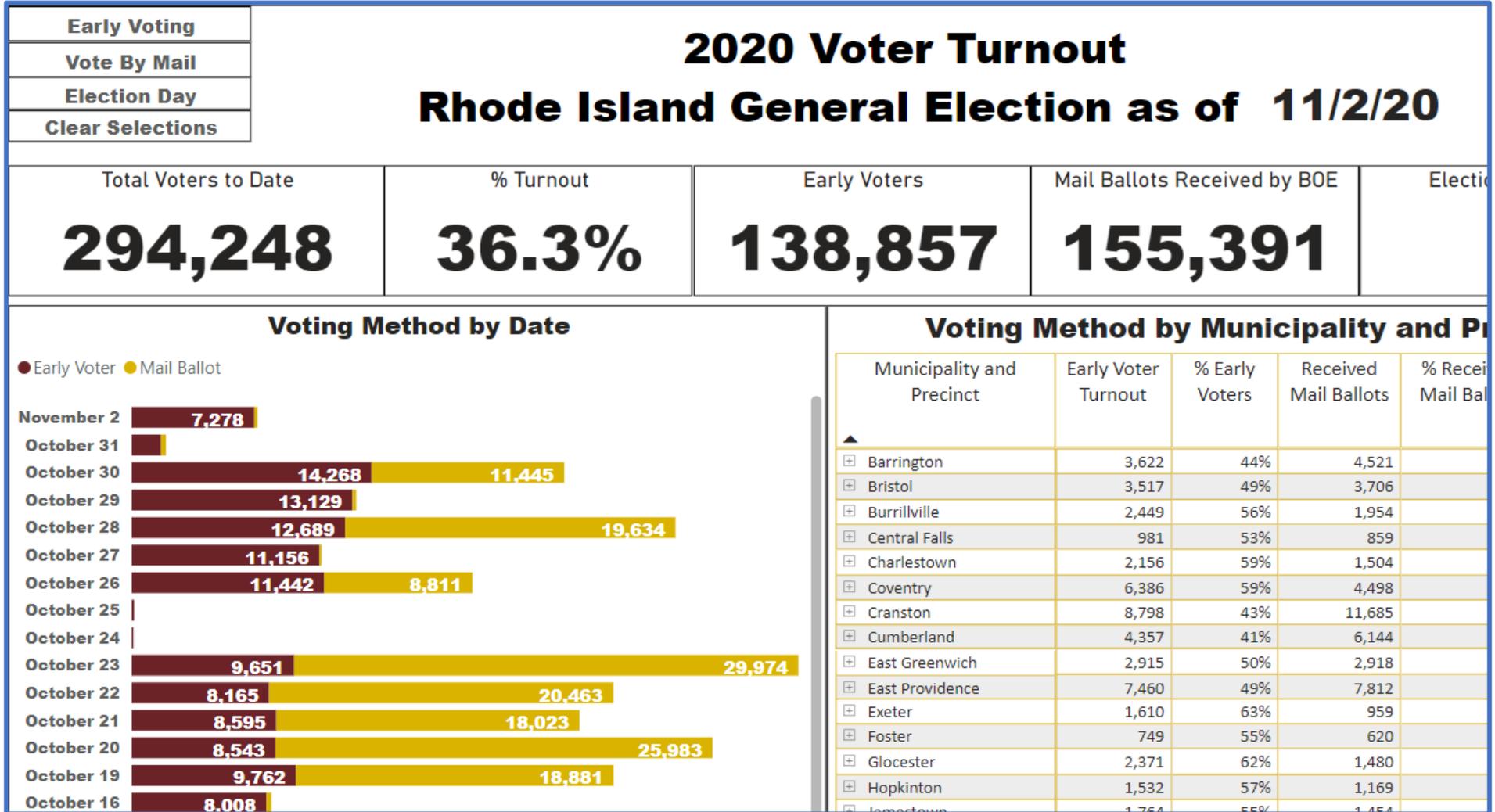
2020 Elections Funding Sources



Funding Source	Total 2020
Federal CARES Act	3,022,037
Federal HAVA	172,785
State General Revenue	844,589
CEIR Grant	389,622



Data Visualization



Combating Disinformation/Misinformation

- #TrustedInfo 2020 Campaign
- Digital Communications Toolkit
- CEIR Grant Funding for Elections Communications
 - Paid advertising (English and Spanish) on TV, radio, streaming services, bus shelters
 - 2-1-1 Voter Information Hotline
 - Voter Information Handbook
 - Media liaison for Board of Elections
- Media Briefing with Federal and State Partners

Federal and State Partners



Recommended Amendments to RIGL

- **Mail balloting**
 - Eliminate the two witness or notary requirement
 - Allow voters to apply for a mail ballot online
 - Allow any voter to be added to permanent mail ballot list
- **Early in-person voting**
 - Update the law to reflect the 20-day in-person voting period in advance of Election Day
 - Add one weekend of early voting
- **Amend voter registration deadline**
 - Remove 30-day deadline from RI Constitution
 - Enact same day voter registration or shorten the deadline



Recommended Amendments to RIGL

- **Move State Primary date**
- **Improve ability to directly communicate with voters**
 - Examine privacy concerns associated with contact information publicly available in voters' records



Questions

