

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Gene Thompson-Grove <genetg@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 1:14 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee; Rob Rock; Nick Lima; Sharon Connors; Kathy Placencia  
**Subject:** Support for H-5300

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

**March 10, 2025**

The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Support for H-5300 (Election Worker Protections)**

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

As a poll worker for the past five years in Newport, Rhode Island, I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 5300. Introduced on behalf of the Secretary of State, this bill has the backing of the State Board of Elections, the Rhode Island Town & City Clerks Association, and the Newport Canvassing Authority.

I firmly believe we must codify protections for election officials and poll workers against threats to our personal safety while performing our official duties.

Election officials and poll workers serve as the frontline defenders of our democracy, ensuring the integrity and smooth operation of our elections. Across the country, we have witnessed a troubling exodus of experienced election officials due to rising threats and pressures. I understand that in Rhode Island alone, more than one-third of senior election officials have either left their positions or retired since 2020. In the most recent election cycle, we saw unprecedented challenges, including intimidation, mailed threats such as white powder sent to the State Board of Elections, and "swatting" incidents targeting election officials. If we want to protect our electoral system, we must act now to safeguard those who administer it.

Serving as a poll worker is an honor and a privilege. As a Warden, I take pride in fostering a sense of teamwork and commitment among my fellow workers—citizens who dedicate long hours under demanding conditions to ensure every vote counts. We assist voters, problem-solve logistical issues, manage check-in stations, accommodate individuals with disabilities, and support first-time voters—all while maintaining order and professionalism. But we should not have to do this work under the threat of harassment, intimidation, or violence. Election workers deserve a safe and secure environment, just as voters deserve a system free from fear and coercion.

Passing H-5300 would send a clear message: Rhode Island is committed to protecting our democracy and those who uphold it. It would also help retain experienced election officials and attract new talent to this vital civic duty.

I urge you to support this critical legislation during the 2024 legislative session.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
Louise (Gene) Thompson-Grove

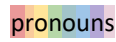
Poll Worker  
Newport, RI 02840

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**Gene Thompson-Grove**

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 **pronouns:** She/Her/Hers