

Kirk McDonough
Chairperson

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections



Quilcia I. Moronta
Member

VACANT
Member

**CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786**

March 7, 2025

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

RE: Cranston Board of Canvassers Support for H-5300 (Election Worker Protections)

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Cranston Board of Canvassers has voted unanimously to **support** H-5300, which would codify protections for election workers against security threats. This legislation is also supported by the RI Town and City Clerks' Association, RI Board of Elections, RI League of Cities and Towns, and Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore. We sincerely appreciate the House's prior overwhelming passage of this legislation in the 2024 session, as well.

We have seen record numbers of attacks and threats against election officials around the nation. In the City of Cranston, there have been two documented incidents of physical attacks against Canvassing Authority office infrastructure that each resulted in arrests by local law enforcement. In other jurisdictions nationally, election officials have had to move their families to hotels, or needed protective details. Many states have since enacted laws to protect the people who are responsible for managing our sacred voting and electoral processes.

In the 2024 election cycle, **election officials in Rhode Island were victims of attacks** including white powder envelopes mailed to the state Board of Elections in Cranston, and "swatting." Elsewhere in America, election infrastructure was attacked using incendiary devices, bomb threats, physical and verbal threats, and otherwise.

Nothing is more important than protecting the very foundation of our democracy – and the hard-working civil servants who ensure it functions. Nationally, hundreds of senior election workers have left the field following serious threats to their lives, impossible increases in their workloads, and drastic changes in how the public perceives the work of these civil servants. Nearly half have left or changed jobs in Rhode Island since 2020.

Election workers have a right – and a necessity – to feel safe when completing our official duties, afforded the full protections of state law. Those who seek to threaten our democracy should face severe criminal penalties, not only as a deterrent against committing such crimes, **but as a signal to election officials that their work and community service is valued and essential to preserving our free society and our system of government.**

Very truly yours,

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers