



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair  
House Committee on State Government and Elections

RE: In support of H7387 – An Act Relating to Elections – Deceptive and Fraudulent Synthetic Media in Election Communications

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write in support of House Bill 7387, legislation that will set parameters and guidelines on the use of synthetic media in election communications.

Over the last few years, artificial intelligence technology has advanced quickly, making it difficult to determine the validity and authenticity of what is being communicated or portrayed in different media. Artificial intelligence tools have the capacity to create synthetic media, which refers to the alteration of an image, audio, or video misconstruing an individual's appearance, speech, or conduct. The improper use of these tools is leading to misinformation and erroneous representations convincingly imitating candidates, elected leaders, and other public figures - otherwise known as "deepfakes."

The advent and popularity of deepfakes and similar content pose challenges to the functioning of elections and democracy because such communications can deprive the public of the accurate information it needs to make informed decisions in elections. Across the country, deepfakes have been used repeatedly to deceive the public about statements and actions taken by political leaders, which is especially dangerous in the lead-up to an election when there is not sufficient time for campaigns to debunk these mistruths before voters head to the polls.

The proposed legislation will prohibit a person, corporation, or political action committee from using synthetic media within ninety days of any election unless the media includes a disclosure. It creates a private right of action for candidates affected by synthetic media when the disclosure requirement is violated. This legislation ensures the balance between preventing misinformation and protecting the First Amendment, with allowances for Constitutionally-protected speech like press coverage, satire, and parody.

Following the example of other states like Colorado, I recommend incorporating elected officials into this protection to ensure that synthetic media is not used to spread falsehoods to voters. Our office is working with Representative Baginski and will follow up with the Committee to make this edit.

I urge this Committee and the full House to support this legislation with the recommendation, as it will ensure that we protect the integrity and authenticity of how we run our elections in this state.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at [marias@sos.ri.gov](mailto:marias@sos.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore  
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections  
The Honorable Jacquelyn Baginski

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