



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 & Elections

RE: In support of H7664 – An Act Relating to Elections – Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write in support of House Bill 7664, legislation that will move the primary date to the last Tuesday in August and simultaneously codify a process for local boards of canvassers to notify the State Board of Elections if there are suspicious patterns of forged signatures on a candidate's nomination papers.

In light of last fall's Congressional District 1 special election scandal of forged signatures, our office is seeking to proactively instill a process for local boards of canvassers to notify the State Board of Elections and, subsequently, other applicable cities and towns in the instance they suspect forgery. The State Board of Elections shall promulgate rules and regulations on the implementation of this process, which should help in mitigating any irregular activity surrounding the collection and verification of signatures on nomination papers for future elections.

This legislation will benefit voters, election officials, and, specifically, our military and overseas personnel. The Department of State has an obligation to comply with the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, which requires that we send mail ballots to military and overseas voters 45 days before an election. With our current primary date, Department of State staff can barely meet this requirement and would certainly be unable to comply with the MOVE Act should a drawn-out recount or election challenge occur.

I urge this Committee and the full House to support this legislation, as we believe it will enhance the public's confidence in how we run elections in the state while ensuring transparency throughout all aspects of an election.

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.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections
The Honorable June Speakman

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

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