



Testimony in Support

JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION

3/18/25

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H5515, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution to remove the 30-day state and local residency requirements for voter registration and allow registration on or before Election Day.

At the Latino Policy Institute (LPI), we are deeply committed to advocating for policies that promote civic engagement and equitable access to democratic participation, particularly for Latino communities and historically underrepresented populations in Rhode Island. Ensuring that all eligible voters can easily register and exercise their right to vote is critical for a truly representative democracy.

Latinos are one of the fastest-growing demographic groups in Rhode Island, yet they face structural and procedural barriers that limit voter participation. H5515 would remove unnecessary restrictions that disproportionately impact new residents, low-income workers, students, and other marginalized communities—all groups that often struggle with rigid residency requirements.

This legislation is essential because it expands voter access by ensuring that eligible voters who have recently moved or are experiencing housing instability are not disenfranchised. Many Latino community members, including renters, seasonal workers, and recent arrivals to Rhode Island, would benefit from this change. It also supports the working-class community, as many Latinos work multiple jobs with unpredictable schedules, making it difficult to navigate registration deadlines. Same-day voter registration provides flexibility and accessibility for those who may not have had the opportunity to register in advance.

Additionally, H5515 increases civic engagement by encouraging participation among young, first-time, and minority voters, who historically face obstacles in the registration process. Research has shown that same-day voter registration boosts turnout rates and strengthens democracy without compromising election integrity. More than 20 states and Washington, D.C. have already adopted same-day voter registration, demonstrating that this reform aligns Rhode Island with national best practices for an inclusive electoral system.

H5515 is a critical step toward ensuring equal access to the ballot for all Rhode Islanders, particularly for the Latino community and other historically marginalized groups. By

eliminating outdated residency requirements and allowing registration through Election Day, we make Rhode Island's democracy more inclusive, equitable, and accessible.

We urge the committee to pass H 5515 and move Rhode Island toward a more just and participatory electoral system. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Awilda Reinoso Lopez
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