

**BROWN EVERY VOTE COUNTS POSITION: SUPPORT**

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*The Honorable Representative Evan Shanley  
House State Government and Elections Committee  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903*

*March 18, 2025*

Honorable Representative Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

We write to express our support of House Resolution 5515, legislation that would present a ballot question to voters to amend the State Constitution to eliminate the thirty-day voter registration requirement.

Brown Every Vote Counts is a nonpartisan student organization advocating for expanded voting access across Rhode Island. We primarily support this resolution because it would pave the way for a same day voter registration provision to be introduced in a future session.

Eliminating the thirty-day requirement would have a tremendously positive impact on voting access. Rhode Island maintains one of the strictest voter registration deadline periods nationally, along with states such as Alaska, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Rhode Island can be identified as an outlier among predominantly Southern states that continue to enact measures limiting voting access.

Following the amendment of the State Constitution, the House has a crucial duty to continue removing other present-day barriers and expanding voting access. Although Rhode Island permits same day voter registration for presidential and vice presidential elections, citizens should still have the opportunity to exercise the franchise, to the fullest extent, in congressional, state, and local elections. Same day registration could potentially increase voter turnout by 3-5% by more easily allowing historically disenfranchised groups – often low-income and minority populations - to participate in the voting process. Furthermore, Rhode Island has 74,000 college students, approximately 6.5% of the state's population. A recent study conducted in 2022 demonstrated that same day voter registration potentially increases voter turnout by approximately 7% among voters ages 18-24. Therefore, such legislation could increase voter turnout for over 5000 young people in Rhode Island.

**This past Election Day (11/5/24)**, members of Every Vote Counts conducted exit polling in 11 precincts across Providence. Our organization collected over 500 surveys which contained standard demographic information, questions about confidence in local election officials (as requested by the Secretary of State's Office), and questions gauging support for two policy proposals, one being same day voter registration. After reviewing the surveys, our preliminary findings reveal that of these voters, 73% support same day voter registration. In addition, we found an 8:1 ratio of individuals strongly in support of same day voter registration to those strongly opposed. While our final report, to be released shortly, will contain more extensive findings, these initial statistics shed light on the overwhelming support for same day voter registration.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [evc@brown.edu](mailto:evc@brown.edu).

Sincerely,  
Brown Every Vote Counts