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From: Gene Thompson-Grove <genetg@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 10:40 PM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Cc: Christine Stenning; Maureen Thompson; Gayle Lawrence; Lois Murray; Susan Taylor; Brookes Moody; Deborah Horowitz Schuessler; Susan Travis; Mary Alice Smith; Trish Sylvester
Subject: Support for H-5515

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
Committee on State Government and Elections
House of Representatives
Rhode Island General Assembly
Providence, RI 02903

Chair Shanley,

As a Rhode Island resident and board member of the Newport County League of Women Voters, I have extensive experience with voter registration, including serving as a five-year poll worker, collaborating with Salve Regina University's *Salve Votes* initiative, and assisting in Newport's Canvassing Office during the fall of 2024. Through these roles, I've registered hundreds of voters and had countless conversations about Rhode Island's registration process.

I write in support of H-5515. High voter turnout is vital to a healthy democracy, and restrictive registration deadlines hinder participation. Rhode Island is one of only 10 states requiring registration 30 days before an election—an outdated rule given modern digital systems. Same-day registration increases turnout and allows voters to update or correct registrations.

Research shows that same-day registration boosts participation by about five percent without significant issues. Unregistered Rhode Islanders can vote only for president and vice president at designated polling places—a limited and inadequate alternative.

H-5515 does not enact same-day registration but lets voters decide whether to remove the 30-day rule from the state constitution. If approved, the General Assembly can establish new voter registration policies.

Same-day registration is a hallmark of modern elections. Rhode Island has already implemented automatic and online registration, mail ballots, and early voting. Updating our outdated deadline system is the logical next step. Election officials support this change, including the Secretary of State, Board of Elections, and Town and City Clerks Association. It's time to remove unnecessary barriers and ensure all Rhode Islanders can fully participate in elections.

Thank you for your consideration.

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