

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

Dear Chairman Shanley and Distinguished Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections,

I write today in strong support of House Joint Resolution 5515, which proposes a constitutional amendment to modernize Rhode Island's voting requirements. This amendment seeks to eliminate the existing 30-day state and local residency requirements and allow eligible citizens to register to vote up to and including Election Day. As an advocate for inclusive democratic processes, I believe this resolution is a pivotal step toward ensuring all Rhode Islanders have equitable access to participate in our elections.

### **Eliminating Residency Requirements**

The current mandate that voters reside in the state and their respective municipalities for at least 30 days before an election can inadvertently disenfranchise individuals who have recently moved. Removing these residency requirements aligns Rhode Island with more flexible standards, acknowledging the mobility of modern society and ensuring that all citizens, regardless of recent relocations, retain their fundamental right to vote.

### **Implementing Same-Day Voter Registration**

Allowing same-day voter registration has been shown to significantly increase voter turnout. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, states with same-day registration often experience voter participation rates 5 to 7 percentage points higher than those without. This reform particularly benefits young voters, marginalized communities, and those facing unpredictable life circumstances, thereby fostering a more inclusive democracy.

### **Maintaining Election Integrity**

Concerns about election security are paramount. It's important to note that same-day registration includes measures to verify voter eligibility, ensuring that only qualified individuals can register and vote. States that have implemented same-day registration have maintained the integrity of their elections, demonstrating that accessibility and security can coexist effectively.

### **Conclusion**

By supporting House Joint Resolution 5515, Rhode Island has the opportunity to modernize its electoral system, remove unnecessary barriers to voting, and uphold the democratic principle that every eligible citizen should have their voice heard. I respectfully urge the committee to favorably recommend this resolution and advance it to the full House for consideration.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Hillary V. Lima  
31 Edward Street  
Coventry, RI 02816