



March 18, 2025

Chair Evan P. Shanley
House Committee on State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for H-5515 – Joint Resolution in Support of Same Day Registration

Dear Chair Shanley and Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections:

The Rhode Island Chapter of the National Organization for Women (RI NOW) supports H-5515 to allow for registration to vote up to and on election day. RI NOW is a non-partisan women's organization with a long history of advocacy for voting integrity and reform. Same day registration in Rhode Island elections is an important and long overdue reform in our state electoral process.

- Rhode Island currently has the longest (30 day) period between registration and voting of any state in the nation.
- Thanks to investments made in updating election systems in recent years, Rhode Island has an infrastructure that would require few, if any, costs and burdens to the cities and towns to implement same day voter registration.
 - Rhode Island already has a system for same day voter registration allowing people to vote for president and vice president only, which over 9,000 people made use of in the 2024 general election. We see no legitimate reason why their eligibility should be simultaneously denied for other offices and ballot questions.
- Rhode Island currently has robust fraud protection protocols that would be unchanged in allowing for same day voter registration.

Additionally, an overwhelming reason to move to same day registration is that Rhode Island has a dismal record of voter turnout, particularly in the primaries which often determine which candidate is the likely winner in the general election. Here are some good reasons to implement same day voter registration:

- 23 states and Washington, D.C. have already implemented some version of same day voter registration.

- There is strong evidence that same day and election day registration will increase voter turnout—between 3% and 7%, with no apparent differential effect on turnout for either party.
- Studies show that same day registration benefits low and middle-income voters most, including those who are younger, nonwhite, poorer, and less likely to have stable addresses.

RI NOW believes that Rhode Island has a strong interest in engaging all eligible voters in the election process. We have the tools to do this easily and efficiently. Now we need the will to open up the voting process so that all people who wish to make their voices heard in elections, to exercise their fundamental democratic right to vote, can do so without the undue burden of a 30-day advance registration. RI NOW wholeheartedly supports same day voter registration and we urge you to pass H-5515 out of committee and bring it to the floor for a vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Lesley Bunnell
President
RI NOW



Giona Picheco
Legislative Chair
RI NOW

Rhode Island National Organization for Women (RI NOW) is a membership-based advocacy organization with hundreds of members and supporters throughout the state of Rhode Island. Our mission is to take action to bring women into full participation in all aspects of public and private life without experiencing barriers based on gender. Our key issue areas include economic equity, ending violence against women, reproductive health and justice, 2SLGBTQIA+ civil rights, and ending racism.