

Kirk McDonough
Chairperson

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections



Quilcia I. Moronta
Member

VACANT
Member

**CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786**

March 15, 2025

The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Cranston Board of Canvassers Support for H-5515 (Voter Registration Deadline Amendment)

Dear Chairman Shanley and Hon. Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers to request the support for **H-5515**, an act that would provide flexibility to the General Assembly to modify the 30-day voter registration deadline by removing it from the state Constitution. This bill is supported by a vote of both the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association and the Rhode Island Board of Elections, and by the Secretary of State, among other organizations.

Rhode Island has the longest voter registration deadline in the country, which disenfranchises many voters each election cycle. Rhode Island already has same day registration for presidential election, as it is required by federal law. **H-5515's** removal of the 30-day deadline from the Constitution will allow the General Assembly to discuss a more equitable deadline for voters to register that will improve election administration and preserve the right to vote for all Rhode Islanders.

As it stands, hundreds of provisional ballots around the state are disqualified each year because residents have moved within 30 days of an election, and while they notified their local canvassers, the voter rolls are frozen by the existing provision – meaning local boards cannot process those changes if received within 30 days. Accordingly, local boards must reject many provisional ballots for otherwise eligible voters who failed to file their registration by the deadline, **even though the reality is many have been legally residing in the district for months or more.** The 30-day freeze means local boards cannot process registrations, which creates a backlog. By the time a primary or election is over, in Cranston alone, we have 2,000 to 3,000 registrations queued up to be processed, adding a significant burden for our staff, especially in the short period between a primary and general. This is why the Cranston Board of Canvassers unanimously supports this legislation, which asks voters to consider repealing the 30-day deadline, **presently the longest deadline of any state in the United States.**

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. If you have any questions on this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-780-3128, or via email at nlima@cranstonri.gov.

Very truly yours,

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers