

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-5516 (All Write-ins Posted with Official Results)

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

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers in strong support of **H-5516**, which makes important revisions to the write-in candidate declaration and tabulation process.

This bill is supported by **unanimous** votes of the RI Town and City Clerks' Association and the RI Board of Elections, and also by the RI League of Cities and Towns, among other organizations and local election offices. Similar attempts to reform Rhode Island's highly irregular write-in tabulation requirements and lack of declaration process have previously passed the House of Representatives three times.

H-5516 is a simple bill: it requires all write-in votes cast by voters in every race – even if frivolous or for fictional characters – to be scanned and posted on the state Board of Elections' website as part of official election results. This way, all Rhode Islanders can view the actual write-in vote cast by every voter, in every contest.

The act further requires local boards of canvassers to meet in a public meeting and adjudicate individual write-ins – in other words, determine the voter's intent – in any race in which the total number of write-ins cast may affect the outcome. Is it a valuable use of public time and resources for a local board to determine whether or not "Mickey Mouse" and "Mickey A. Mouse" should both be attributed to the same fictional character? In most cases, no – but we agree that said vote should still count, and still be published as part of official results. And, in cases where the total write-ins cast in a contest may affect the election outcome, the local board would, in fact, have to meet publicly and make that individual determination for each and every write-in vote cast.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions regarding 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