

Martha J. Tetreault, Chair
Giana Savastano, Manager



Jeffrey A. Gaulin, Clerk
John P. Cunningham, Member

CITY OF WOONSOCKET
BOARD OF CANVASSERS AND REGISTRATION
169 MAIN ST P.O. BOX B
WOONSOCKET RI 02895

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Representative Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House State Government and Elections Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for 2025 H5517 – An Act Relating to Elections – Voting Districts and Officials

Dear Chairman Shanley,

I am writing in my capacity as an election administrator and on behalf of the Woonsocket Board of Canvassers asking for your support of H5517. This bill seeks to increase the maximum number of voters that a polling place can accommodate, while also allowing a precinct that exceeds this amount to remain intact until the next decennial redistricting. H5517 is presented on behalf of the RI Town and City Clerks Association, with the support of the RI League of Cities and Towns and the RI Board of Elections.

Election administrators recognize that changes in polling place assignments can be disruptive for voters. For one, the confusion and frustration of it all may deter them from getting to their correct precinct to cast a ballot. On the other hand, a new precinct assignment may complicate a voter's transit to the polls. Minimizing disruptions is paramount, and this bill would move the needle towards that end.

Skeptics may say that increasing the maximum cap may result in longer lines and put too much strain on poll workers. Fortunately, the RI Board of Elections (BOE) already considers volume capacity when conducting their regular, multipoint polling place inspections. All polls are subject to inspection, a unanimous vote of approval from their local Board and approval from the BOE.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Giana Savastano
Manager
Woonsocket Board of Canvassers