



March 18, 2025

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

RE: HOUSE BILL H-5517 – RELATING TO ELECTION -- VOTING DISTRICTS AND OFFICIALS

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, I write to express our support for House Bill 5517. This important legislation seeks to enhance election administration by increasing the maximum number of voters per polling location from 3,000 to 3,500. It also ensures that polling places exceeding this limit will not be relocated until the next decennial redistricting, provided there is unanimous approval from the local board and certification by the State Board of Elections.

Efficient election administration is essential to ensuring voter accessibility and maintaining a well-functioning democratic process. By raising the cap, this bill allows election officials to allocate limited resources more effectively, directing them where they are needed most rather than forcing unnecessary polling place relocations. The ability to maintain larger polling locations where operationally feasible helps preserve continuity for voters who are accustomed to casting their ballots at familiar sites.

Importantly, this proposal does not pose a risk of widespread polling place closures. Instead, it primarily affects a small number of polling sites that are already nearing the existing cap. Current law already prohibits the closure of polling locations within low-income and elderly residential developments, ensuring that access remains equitable for all voters. Without this adjustment, several polling places may be required to split into multiple precincts, leading to increased costs, logistical challenges, and potential voter confusion.

House Bill 5517 provides a commonsense solution to an arbitrary cap that no longer reflects the realities of election administration. We respectfully urge the committee's support to enhance voter experience, improve efficiency, and reduce unnecessary burdens on both local governments and election administrators.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee