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From: RI Democratic Women's Caucus <ridwomenscaucus@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 4:11 PM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Subject: Support for H-6092 - online nomination papers

Please consider the below as written testimony in support of H-6092 on behalf of the Rhode Island Democratic Women's Caucus

Dear Chairman Shanley and honorable members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

The Rhode Island Democratic Women's Caucus is in **strong support** of House bill **H-6092**, to provide for an online nomination paper portal for election nomination papers.

An online process allows individuals from various geographic areas, including those who might be homebound or living in rural areas, to participate in the signature collection process without having to attend physical events. Candidates and voters can collect signatures at their convenience, rather than coordinating schedules for in-person meetings and events. This makes it easier for candidates to gather the necessary support without the time constraints of in-person interactions.

Traditional in-person signature collection can require organizing events, and even hiring signature gatherers. An online system reduces or eliminates many of these costs, making it more affordable for candidates to run for office, especially for those with fewer resources.

Online signature collection systems can allow for real-time verification of signatures. This speeds up the entire process, allowing for quicker feedback about the status of the qualification for the ballot. If signatures are invalid, they can be flagged and corrected promptly. The electronic nature of the system can automate many tasks that would otherwise be done manually, such as counting signatures or validating voter registration status, leading to a faster and more efficient process.

People who might otherwise not engage in the process due to time, mobility, or health limitations may be more likely to participate in online signature collection. This can increase the overall participation of the electorate in the democratic process. It allows people with busy schedules (e.g., working parents, students) to contribute to the process at times that fit their availability.

An online process can also provide for better transparency, allowing candidates, voters, and election officials to track the status of nomination signatures. Candidates can monitor how many signatures they have collected in real-time (or close to real-time) and identify areas where they need more support. Online signature collection can be made more secure with advanced identity verification technologies, reducing the potential for fraud or errors in the signature-gathering process.

The online process that was used in 2020 due to COVID-19 was done very well and proved to be an acceptable way to collect signatures, and we hope an online process will be put in place for all future elections.

We hope that the House State Government and Elections Committee will pass H-6092 this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeanine Calkin
Vice-chair
Rhode Island Democratic Women's Caucus