

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



**Department of Corrections**

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The Honorable Evan P. Shanley  
House Committee on State Government & Elections  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

March 25, 2025

**Re: H5874 – Relating to Elections – Voting**

Dear Chairperson Shanley:


This evening the House State Government & Elections Committee will consider House Bill #5874 which aims to make it easier for eligible persons who are incarcerated at the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) to vote by outlining the duties of a "voting coordinator" within the Rhode Island Department of Corrections (RIDOC). The Department supports the statutory obligations that would be placed upon it by this legislation as it would codify existing practices.

In 2024, RIDOC and the Secretary of State's Office embarked on a new, intentional effort to ensure all eligible voters who wish to cast a ballot were afforded the opportunity to do so. As a result of this dedicated collaboration, the Department is now in the process of creating a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that its staff can utilize in future election cycles. We are thankful to the Secretary of State's Office for working with us to ensure the chain of custody for ballots cast exclude RIDOC staff, meaning the ballots go directly from the hands of elections staff to members of our incarcerated population and back to the hands of elections staff. Additionally, we have modified our voter registration efforts to hold registration drives behind the walls and to ask new commitments of their voting status so we can appropriately submit names of individuals who are eligible and interested in voting to the Secretary of State's Office begin the voting process. This process also includes notices posted in common areas and on the tablets provided to the incarcerated population.

I'm grateful for Representative Cruz's outreach to the Department on this bill and her willingness to learn about the practices and procedures we have proactively implemented to ensure all who are eligible to vote have the opportunity to exercise this important right.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

  
Wayne T. Salisbury Jr.  
Director

cc: Honorable Members of the House State Government & Elections Committee  
The Honorable Representatives Cruz, Felix, Sanchez, Morales, Potter, Kislak, Casimiro, and Alzate  
Nicole McCarty, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House