

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Evan Shanley
Chair, House State Government & Election Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Room 125
Providence, RI
Via email

Dear Chair Stanley and Committee Members,

On behalf of Verified Voting, I am writing in opposition to House Bill 7007 which would reinstate ballot return via the internet. Verified Voting is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization with a mission to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Since our founding in 2004 by computer scientists, we have acted on the belief that the integrity and strength of our democracy rely on citizens' trust that each vote is counted as cast.

Ballot return via the internet (including mobile, email, fax, or website portal) fails to confer that trust. The security risks associated with electronic ballot return are severe, well-documented, and broadly acknowledged by the federal government's top security agencies and the nation's leading cybersecurity experts. At present, no known technology can secure ballots returned over the internet.

A joint analysis from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) classifies electronic ballot return as high risk, capable of enabling attacks that could alter or disrupt election results at scale. As stated in the analysis, "Electronic ballot return faces significant security risks to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of voted ballots. These risks can ultimately affect the tabulation and results and can occur at scale."¹

Other agencies have been equally clear. The Department of Defense has stated that it does not advocate transmitting cast ballots electronically under any method.² The Department of Homeland Security has likewise advised that online voting is not recommended at any level of

¹ [CISA, EAC, FBI, and NIST, Risk Management for Electronic Ballot Delivery, Marking, and Return, 2020/2024.](#)

² [DOD statement quoted in Greg Gordon, McClatchy, April 16, 2015.](#)

government at this time.³

Congress shares these concerns. The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence concluded that no system of online voting has yet established itself as secure, and urged states to resist adopting internet voting.⁴

Independent cybersecurity experts mirror these findings. A working group convened by the University of California, Berkeley—including pioneers in cryptography and election security—determined that the technology required to secure online ballot return does not exist today, and that a single attacker could potentially alter thousands or even millions of votes.⁵ The group further emphasized that online voting lacks the basic safeguards present in other online transactions, because the secret ballot prevents voters from verifying that their vote was received and counted as cast. Currently, no certification standards exist for electronic ballot return systems.

Electronic ballot return also carries multiple unique vulnerabilities, including malware, denial-of-service attacks, spoofing, identity fraud, and breaches that could expose voters' private information.⁶ Any one of these could compromise an election; several could do so without detection.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to reject House Bill 7007 to reinstate electronic ballot return. Reinstating electronic ballot return would run counter to the unified assessment of national security experts, cybersecurity professionals, federal intelligence agencies, and leading academic researchers. The risks—to ballot confidentiality, integrity, and public confidence—simply outweigh any potential benefits at this time.

We appreciate your leadership and your commitment to ensuring both accessibility and security in our elections.

Sincerely,

C.Jay Coles
Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs

³ DHS statement quoted in Sarah Horwitz, Washington Post, May 17, 2016.

⁴ SSCI, Russian Active Measures, Vol. 1.

⁵ UC Berkeley CSP, Working Group Statement on Internet Ballot Return, 2022.

⁶ *Ibid.*