



STATE of RHODE ISLAND
Executive Department
GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES
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Legislative Impact Statement

To: Chairperson Representative Shanley
From: Elisabeth Hubbard, Executive Secretary
Re: 26 House 7007 – AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS – MAIL BALLOTS

Wednesday, January 15, 2026

The Governor's Commission on Disabilities' Legislation Committee has developed a Legislative Impact Statement on the bill listed below. The Commission would be pleased to present testimony to the committee. Please contact me (462-0110) for additional information.

The Commission finds this bill beneficial.

This act would continue to entitle disabled and military voters to utilize electronically transmitted ballots.

This method has been used to enable access for voters with disabilities for several years with success. The Commission participated in the Secretary of State/Board of Election Voting Accessibility Task Force, and had the opportunity to review several options for independent, secret and secure voting options for voters who would not be voting in person on election day. When this legislation was first enacted, the Commission supported the establishment of a secure portal to electronically transmit mail ballots to and from voters with disabilities and continues to do so.

While there are alternatives (paper and braille mail ballots), people with disabilities are increasingly using technology to conduct their personal business and participate in their community. Many people are unable to vote using paper, but could do so electronically with their assistive technology. This ensures privacy as they would not be forced to rely on someone else to mark their ballot for them. Enabling people to use an electronic method to vote by mail will ensure that eligible voters with disabilities will be able to exercise their Constitutional rights to vote privately and independently.