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Testimony on HB 7007

An Act Relating to Elections – Mail Ballots

January 15, 2026

Dear Chairperson Shanley and members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections:

The Rhode Island Developmental Disability Council believes provisions made in 2022 for Rhode Island voters with a disability to have the option to receive, complete and return their ballot electronically has improved access and privacy for many voters with a disability. Therefore, we feel that the piloting of this access from 2022 to the present day has fully proven that the Board of Elections is perfectly able to implement electronic access without any compromise to the overall security of Rhode Island's voting system and it is time to remove the expiration date for the pilot project.

Otherwise, returning to the prior system where voters with a disability would again receive and complete the ballot in paper form, many voters with a disability will once again not be able to vote independently on the paper form and will again be unable to use their computer or adaptive equipment/software to complete the ballot. Instead, these voters would be required to ask someone to assist them with reading, filling out and mailing back the ballot. In other words, they will be forced to compromise the privacy of their ballot in order to complete/return it.

The Council feels strongly that election security should be a primary concern in evaluating methods to allow for electronic return of ballots, but also feels that the Board of Elections has clearly demonstrated its ability to allow for the electronic return of ballots without, in any way, lessening the security of the overall voting system. Therefore, please remove the expiration date and allow this much needed and totally successful access to continue for the Rhode Island voters that are in need of it.

Sincerely,

Robert Marshall

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