

**Testimony on House Bill No. 7007**

**Relating to Elections - Mail Ballots**

January 14, 2026

Chairman Shanley and members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections,

My name is Zachary Gauthier. I am writing to you today not only as a lifelong Rhode Islander but as a dedicated advocate and a man living with Cerebral Palsy, asking for your support of House Bill 7007.

For many, voting is as simple as walking to a mailbox. But for those of us in the disability community, physical barriers can often turn a constitutional right into an impossible task.

This bill is a deeply humanistic solution to a problem that has sidelined voices like mine for too long. By allowing electronically transmitted ballots for disabled and military voters, you are providing us with a tool that respects our independence and our dignity.

As an advocate, I see firsthand how important it is for our laws to keep pace with technology to ensure inclusion. This isn't just about convenience; it's about making sure that a physical diagnosis or a military deployment doesn't result in a lost vote.

I understand that security is always a concern with electronic systems. I am encouraged that House Bill 7007 requires independent security reviews and high accessibility standards. It shows that we can have a system that is both safe and inclusive.

Voting should be an act of belonging. When you pass this bill, you are telling the disability and military communities that our voices matter enough to remove the hurdles in our way.

Please support House Bill 7007.

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