



TOWN OF COVENTRY
BOARD OF CANVASSERS
1670 FLAT RIVER ROAD
COVENTRY, RI 02816
401-822-9150

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Coventry Board of Canvassers Support for H-7049 (September Primary Labor Day Issue)

Dear Chairman Shanley and Hon. Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

The Coventry Board of Canvassers fully supports **H-7049**, an act introduced by Rep. Baginski on behalf of the RI Town and City Clerks' Association that moves the 2026 September primary by one day, to Wednesday, due to Labor Day and related logistical, cost, and legal concerns.

We have serious logistical concerns regarding the access and set up of our 17 polling locations for the Primary on a major federal holiday. Many of the Town's polling places are private clubs that likely have functions on Labor Day, making access for poll set up nearly impossible. Some of our other regular polling locations will likely be closed and unstaffed on Labor Day, which means we will struggle with access to these sites as well. Failure to properly set up polling locations can compromise the good conduct of the Primary, and cause polls to open late.

In addition to the logistical challenges, the Coventry Board of Canvassers also has concerns about the financial burden of conducting a Primary the day after a major federal holiday. Our polling locations are set up exclusively by Town staff from the Department of Public Works and the Board of Canvassers. Most of these employees are union members with a contract that requires them to be paid at a rate of double time and a half if they work on a holiday. We know that set up of many of our polling locations will in fact have to take place on Labor Day, which means a substantial, additional personnel cost to the Town.

Finally, Coventry holds early voting in our Board of Canvassers Office at the Town Hall Annex, but we also use this same space – and same poll workers – for separate, unrelated polls that are open on Primary Day. If the law does not change, we will have to hire *additional* poll worker personnel to staff early voting for Primary Day, and open separate voting sites in the same building.

Voters will be confused by having the unusual option of voting at either an early voting site from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., or at their normal Primary Day polling place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Local election officials reported significant confusion from voters in the low-turnout, day-after-Labor Day primaries of 2020 and 2023. There are also security and election integrity concerns that, in specific circumstances, could defeat safeguards intended to prevent attempted double voting, as our elections laws were not written to properly accommodate simultaneous early voting and Primary Day voting.

If you have any questions regarding this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-822-9150, or via email at registrar@coventryri.gov. We appreciate your consideration and support for this legislation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marcy A. Alves', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marcy A. Alves
Registrar / Director of Elections