



*Distinctive Communities  
Powerful Alliance*

January 15, 2026

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair  
House State Government and Elections  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: BILL NUMBER H-7049 – RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, representing all 39 municipalities, we are writing in strong support of House Bill 7049. This legislation addresses significant logistical and financial challenges municipalities face in administering statewide primary elections when they coincide with Labor Day.

A recent study found that the statewide cost of conducting early voting and setting up polling locations on Labor Day exceeded \$150,000 and would likely surpass \$200,000 when adjusted for 2026 labor and related costs. These expenses are borne entirely by municipalities and include substantial staff overtime. Beyond cost, municipalities face serious logistical challenges accessing and setting up more than 430 polling locations on a major federal holiday, a process that often requires many hours and access to facilities that are typically closed and unstaffed on Labor Day.

Compounding these challenges, many municipalities conduct early voting in city or town halls that must also serve as Primary Day polling locations. Without changes to current law, municipalities would be required to conduct early voting and Primary Day polling simultaneously, often in the same limited space and with the same poll workers, requiring additional staffing and facilities.

This would be the first time these challenges are experienced on a statewide basis, heightening concerns about voter confusion and election administration. Other states, including Massachusetts, have already responded to similar issues by adjusting their primary dates, and Rhode Island itself has demonstrated that alternative scheduling can be successful, as occurred during the statewide Wednesday primary in 2018.

House Bill 7049 offers a practical, cost-effective solution that reflects lessons learned, reduces unnecessary burdens on municipalities, and ensures elections can be administered efficiently and securely. The League respectfully urges the committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi  
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee