



Town of Westerly

Town Hall • 45 Broad Street • Westerly, Rhode Island 02891
TEL: (401) 348-2503 • FAX: (401) 348-2571

Board of Canvassers

January 14, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL

HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

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

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

Dear Chairperson Shanley and Hon. Members of the House State Government and Election Committee:

The Westerly Board of Canvassers voted unanimously to support **H-7049**, an act that moves the 2026 September Primary by one day, to Wednesday, due to Labor Day. This legislation was introduced on behalf of the Rhode Island Town & City Clerks' Association, acknowledging significant logistical concerns and is supported by the Secretary of State and the RI Board of Elections.

One significant concern is the fact that the final day of early voting would be Labor Day if left unchanged. In previous years, the last day of early voting was one of the busiest. Additionally, municipalities rely on social clubs, churches, and municipal buildings to be used as polling locations and, if closed for the holiday, it may be impossible to access these sites to set up for an election for the following day. It is entirely possible that regular polling locations cannot be used at all, putting a strain on municipalities to find new locations that meet the mandated requirements. Voters may be negatively impacted by facing an undue burden on participation in our democratic process.

Rhode Island law already allows for a primary to be moved one day later when it falls upon a religious holiday. In 2018 the statewide primary had to be moved to a Wednesday due to Rosh Hashanah, and it was conducted successfully.

I respectfully encourage you to consider passage of **H-7049** to move the September 2026 primary, by one day, to Wednesday. Timely passage of this legislation will allow for elections officials to prepare and adequately inform voters. If you have any questions regarding this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-348-2503, or via email at rharold@westerlyri.gov. Thank you for your consideration and support for this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rees S. Harold".

Rees S. Harold
Registrar & Clerk to the Board of Canvassers
Town of Westerly

Cc: Representative Samuel A. Azzinaro
Representative Brian P. Kennedy
Representative Tina L. Spears
Westerly Board of Canvassers
Westerly Town Council