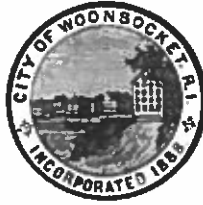


Martha J. Tetreault, *Chair*

Giana Savastano, *Manager*



Jeffrey A. Gaulin, *Clerk*

John P. Cunningham, *Member*

CITY OF WOONSOCKET
BOARD OF CANVASSERS AND REGISTRATION
169 MAIN ST P.O. BOX B
WOONSOCKET RI 02895

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

Re: Support for 7377- “An Act Relating to Elections – Local Canvassing Authorities”

Dear Chairman Shanley and Hon. Members of the Committee,

I am writing in my capacity as an election administrator and on behalf of the Woonsocket Board of Canvassers in support of **H-7377**. The bill is presented on behalf of Rhode Island Town and City Clerk's Association and reflects shared best practices that strengthen continuity of operations in election administration.

Clarifying Areas of Ambiguity

H-7377 provides important clarification in two areas of the current board appointment process. First, it defines what constitutes a “failure” to submit a list under RIGL §17-8-1 by establishing a clear thirty-day window. This clarification is vital because prolonged vacancies on three-member boards can jeopardize the timely completion of key election tasks.

Second, the bill resolves uncertainty regarding which political party should be notified when a vacancy occurs and the two remaining members belong to different political parties. Election administrators – including myself- have grappled with this grey area, and the proposed language of **H-7377** codifies the commonsense practices already recommend and utilized by election administrators.

Addressing Continuity of Operations

In addition to clarifying the Board of Canvassers appointment process, the bill strengthens continuity of operations through updates to RIGL §17-8-2 and §17-8-5. Specifically, the bill directs city and town clerks to correct board member term expirations that are not compliant with current state law. It also requires the designation of a chief and alternate local election official to serve as primary contacts for each municipality, formalizing a structure that supports consistent and reliable communication.

Martha J. Tetreault, Chair

Giana Savastano, Manager



Jeffrey A. Gaulin, Clerk

John P. Cunningham, Member

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Why Support

H-7377 cleans up the local board appointment statute by clarifying areas of ambiguity, while also bolstering the resiliency of local Boards through administrative improvements. Without these updates, municipalities may continue facing preventable disruptions – particularly during periods of increased election activity.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your **support** for **H-7377**.

Sincerely,

Giana Savastano

Manager

Woonsocket Board of Canvassers

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