



**RHODE ISLAND LEAGUE
OF CITIES AND TOWNS**

*Distinctive Communities
Powerful Alliance*

March 10, 2026

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

RE: HOUSE BILL 7378 – AN ACT RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES

Chair Shanley and Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, we respectfully submit testimony in support of House Bill 7378, which seeks to modernize and clarify certain voter notification requirements while ensuring that municipalities can continue to provide voters with clear and accessible information about elections.

This legislation would require local boards of canvassers to advertise early voting dates, hours, and locations both in a newspaper of general circulation and on the municipality's website prior to and throughout the early voting period. Current state law does not require municipalities to advertise early voting information in this manner, and this bill appropriately addresses that gap. By ensuring that this information is made widely available through both traditional and digital channels, the bill will help voters more easily access important election information and encourage participation in the electoral process.

Importantly, the legislation recognizes the budget constraints under which many local election offices operate. To avoid placing additional financial burdens on municipal election administration, the bill adjusts existing legal advertising requirements so that the overall impact on voter outreach budgets remains cost neutral. Municipalities operate with extremely limited funding for election-related communications, and the League appreciates the thoughtful balance this legislation strikes between expanding voter awareness and maintaining fiscal responsibility.

House Bill 7378 also provides local boards of canvassers with the option to advertise the voter registration deadline on their municipal websites in lieu of certain newspaper notices, while still maintaining transparency and public access to this information. In addition, the bill modernizes provisions governing the advertisement of local ballot questions, allowing municipalities to satisfy notice requirements through either a newspaper advertisement or a jurisdiction-wide household mailing, while also requiring that this information be posted on the municipality's website for twenty-five consecutive days.

These updates reflect the realities of how residents access information today while preserving multiple avenues for public notice. The legislation also updates outdated statutory language governing voter registration deadlines that have remained largely unchanged for decades.

We also note that a previous version of this legislation has received significant support, having passed the House twice and previously passed the Senate. The current version has been further strengthened by incorporating recommendations from advocacy organizations to ensure protections and accessibility for voters with disabilities.

For these reasons, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns supports House Bill 7378 as a thoughtful effort to improve voter communication, modernize election notification requirements, and maintain a cost-neutral approach for local election officials.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and we respectfully urge the Committee's favorable consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. Rossi".

Randy R. Rossi
Executive Director

Cc: Honorable Members of House State Government and Elections Committee