



CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
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March 10, 2026

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

Re: Support of House Bill 7572

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the House State Government & Elections Committee,

As the Election Administrator for the City of Newport and on behalf of the Newport Canvassing Authority, I am writing to encourage you to **support** passage of House Bill 7572. This bill, which would help align the early voting and election day experiences, also has the support of State Board of Elections and the Secretary of State's office.

Specifically, H7572 would extend to early voting the existing prohibition on politicking within fifty feet of the entrance to a building that serves as an election day polling location. Early voting is offered at each primary and general election during the local canvassing office's regular business hours for the twenty days before each election. For most communities, this is at our city and town halls. Voters who visit our early voting sites deserve to vote with the same protections as voters on election day. They should have the right vote free from interference or intimidation from campaigns as they enter the building.

Additionally, campaigns are not always good at distinguishing between a potential early voter and a resident coming to access city services or a staff member returning to work from their break. The result is repeated, aggressive outreach to anyone walking into the building and makes visiting a government building an unpleasant experience. The situation is compounded when there are multiple campaigns. By extending this prohibition to early voting, this bill will solve that problem and ensure that early voting sites at city and town halls are protected and welcoming spaces for voters and everyone else.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hugh Moren
Election Administrator

Sharon Connors
Chair, Newport Canvassing Authority