



**Testimony in Support**  
**JOINT RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A**  
**PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION**  
***March 19, 2026***

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Committee,

My name is Awilda Reinoso Lopez, and I serve as the Senior Policy & Research Manager at the Latino Policy Institute, where I lead research, policy analysis, and advocacy efforts focused on advancing equitable opportunities for Latino and historically underrepresented communities across Rhode Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of legislation proposing an amendment to the Rhode Island Constitution to eliminate the 30-day state and local residency requirements for voter registration and allow eligible voters to register on or before Election Day.

At the Latino Policy Institute (LPI), we are committed to advancing policies that strengthen civic engagement and ensure equitable access to democratic participation. Expanding access to voter registration is essential to building a democracy that truly reflects the voices and experiences of all Rhode Islanders.

Latinos continue to be one of the fastest-growing populations in our state, yet many still face structural barriers that limit full participation in the electoral process. Strict residency requirements can disproportionately impact new residents, renters, students, low-income workers, and individuals experiencing housing instability. Removing these outdated barriers is a necessary step toward modernizing Rhode Island's electoral system and ensuring that eligible voters are not unintentionally disenfranchised.

Allowing voter registration through Election Day provides greater flexibility for working families, including many Latino community members who often balance multiple jobs, caregiving responsibilities, and unpredictable work schedules. Same-day voter registration helps ensure that logistical challenges do not prevent eligible individuals from exercising their fundamental right to vote.

This reform also has the potential to increase civic participation among young voters, first-time voters, and communities of color. Evidence from states that have adopted same-day voter registration shows increased participation while maintaining strong election integrity. Aligning Rhode Island with these national best practices will strengthen democratic access and public trust in our electoral system.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to support this resolution and take an important step toward a more inclusive, equitable, and participatory democracy for all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Awilda Reinoso Lopez  
Senior Policy & Research Manager  
Latino Policy Institute