



March 19, 2026

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

Re: In Support of H-7303– Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment to the Constitution – Of Suffrage (Same Day Voter Registration)

Dear Chair Shanley and the Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI), our members, and the low-income Rhode Islanders we serve, I write in **strong support for House Resolution 7303**, which would place a constitutional amendment on the ballot asking voters to eliminate Rhode Island’s 30-day voter registration deadline, the longest in the nation, from the state constitution, paving the way for the General Assembly to enact same-day voter registration.

HNRI’s mission is to increase the supply of safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities through coalition-building, policy advocacy, and strategic communications. A core initiative of this work is *Our Homes, Our Votes*, which promotes civic engagement among low- and moderate-income renters, as well as housing-insecure and unhoused Rhode Islanders. Where we live, and our housing status, is undeniably connected to our ability to fully participate in civic life. For those facing housing insecurity, remaining an active and registered voter is a genuine challenge.

Housing instability creates real, well-documented barriers to voter participation. [Research](#) consistently shows that frequent moves, eviction, and homelessness disrupt voter registration and turnout. Rhode Island’s current 30-day registration deadline compounds this problem by penalizing eligible voters for missing an arbitrary deadline, one that is out of step with the rest of the country and is one of just four such deadlines embedded in any state’s constitution. As our state works to address the housing crisis, we must also remove unnecessary barriers to civic participation so that no eligible voter is disenfranchised because of where, or whether, they have a home.

Same-day voter registration is a proven and practical solution. Rhode Island already has the infrastructure to support it. In the 2024 general election, more than 9,000 voters used same-day registration, a system that already exists for presidential elections and has proven popular and administratively workable. Expanding it to all elections would ensure those same voters can participate consistently at every level of government, where many of the decisions that most directly affect housing, health, and community stability are made.

The case for this resolution is strong and broad. Twenty-three states plus Washington, D.C. already offer same-day registration, including four of our six New England neighbors. States with same-day registration have on average three to seven percent higher voter turnout. Election administrators across Rhode Island, including the Secretary of State, the Board of Elections, and the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks Association, support this legislation. A February 2025 poll showed that more than 54% of Rhode Islanders support same-day voter registration. The infrastructure exists, the will is there, and the evidence is clear.

It is important to note what H-7303 does and does not do. It does not enact same-day registration itself. Rather, it is the necessary first step: it would place a ballot question before voters at the November 2026

general election, asking them to remove the 30-day deadline from the Rhode Island Constitution. Only then can the General Assembly move forward with the pro-voter reforms Rhode Islanders clearly want. The time to act is now, so that voters themselves can weigh in this November.

Rhode Island has made meaningful strides in expanding ballot access, through automatic voter registration, online registration, expanded mail balloting, and early voting. This resolution is the next step in that progress. Rhode Islanders are facing a housing crisis; they should not also face preventable barriers to having their voices heard.

I respectfully urge the Committee to advance this resolution and allow the voters of Rhode Island to decide this important question.

Respectfully,



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