



CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
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The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support of House Bill 8282

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

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 8282**. Introduced on behalf of Secretary of State Gregg Amore, this bill would establish an online portal for voters to electronically sign candidate nomination papers during the ballot qualifying period. This bill also has the support of the Rhode Island City & Town Clerks Association and the State Board of Elections.

Similar to the successful creation of the secure mail ballot application portal in recent years, this bill would allow the Secretary of State's office to create a portal where voters who have a RI driver's license or state ID number would be able to login into their profile and opt to electronically sign the nomination papers for any and all candidates for which they are lawfully eligible to nominate. Ultimately, this bill is beneficial to three groups: voters, candidates, and election officials.

Voters, particularly those who are not physically present in their towns during the nomination paper period such as members of the military or those who are unable to interact with a campaign at a particular place or time, would be able to participate further in the nomination process. This would also benefit voters who may have trouble physically signing the papers on clipboards or need more time to independently review the nomination paper they are signing.

Candidates will benefit because this portal will allow for faster collection and validation of signatures, helping them reach their required threshold for ballot placement sooner. Importantly, because voters will only be given the option to sign for candidates that they are

lawfully eligible for, this bill will help cut down on people mistakenly signing the wrong papers and those signatures being wasted.

Lastly, election officials will benefit from the pre-verification done by the system and the speed of the online portal option. Verifying signatures on nomination papers is a manual and time-consuming task. Local canvassing offices typically suspend all their regular work and focus solely on verifying signatures during the ten-day circulating period. We then spend the following weeks catching up on the backlog of work leading into early voting. The online portal will speed up this process for the voters that opt to use it, because their identity, signature, and geographic eligibility are pre-approved by the system.

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

Respectfully submitted,



Hugh Moren
Election Administrator



Sharon Connors
Chair, Newport Canvassing Authority

CC: Sharon Connors
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