

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
House State Government and Elections Committee

RE: Support - H-7303

Dear Chairman Shanley,

My name is Alissa Kraus and I am a current Brown University first-year studying Political Science. I am writing to express my strong support of H-7303.

I have been passionate about government and voting my entire life. It is one of my firm beliefs that the key to our democracy flourishing lies in there being fewer obstacles to the ballot box.

Whether or not a person votes during their formative years can determine if they continue voting throughout their lives. Those who begin voting at 18 are likely to make it a habit, while those who don't are unlikely to become consistent voters. Furthermore, 18-29 year olds have the lowest voter turnout rates of any age demographic. Citizens under age 30 constituted only 15% of all voters in the 2024 presidential election, even though this age group makes up 20% of the eligible voting population¹. Thus, it is imperative that we as a state make it as easy as possible for college-aged students to vote.

The current thirty day voter registration deadline makes it so that students are not yet moved in for the academic year when the primary election registration deadline passes. Thus, it is difficult for college-aged students to register and vote. These students live in Rhode Island for the majority of the year and ought to have a say in the laws and legislators that represent them. In order to help my generation grow into informed participants in our democracy, I urge that this obstacle to voting be removed.

At a time when voting rights are being restricted across the country—through the SAVE Act, federal seizure of election materials, and law enforcement presence at polling places—it is more important than ever that Rhode Island acts as an example by taking initiative to protect the vote for our citizens. The attacks on voting demonstrate just how fundamental this right is and the importance of taking steps to protect it.

Rhode Island's thirty day voter registration deadline is the longest in the country, and it has not proven necessary. Twenty-three states have implemented same-day voter registration, proving that this system works. Busy people should not be penalized for missing arbitrary deadlines, especially for something as instrumental to our community as voting. Every measure possible ought to be taken to allow the greatest number of people to safely and legally vote. Furthermore, Rhode Island already allows same-day registration for presidential elections. We already have the infrastructure in place—why not expand it to local and state races that affect our everyday lives? While I am relatively new to Providence and Rhode Island, I feel very connected to the city and I feel that this is an important measure in allowing this community to thrive. When more people are registered to vote, which this bill will allow, it will lead to a more engaged electorate and a more connected community as a whole.

I hope the House State Government and Elections Committee will pass H-7303.

Thank you for your consideration,
Alissa Kraus

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2025/06/26/voter-turnout-2020-2024/>