



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

February 26, 2026

The Honorable Matthew L. LaMountain, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: SJR2132 (LaMountain) Joint Resolution to Approve and Publish and Submit to the Electors a Proposition of Amendment of the Constitution – Of Suffrage
S2133 (LaMountain) An Act Relating to Elections – Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates
S2341 (LaMountain) An Act Relating to Elections - Mail Ballots

Dear Chair LaMountain,

I write this letter in support of the legislative package introduced at the request of the Department of State, which aims to increase civic participation, improve election administration processes, and uphold the security of our elections.

Senate Joint Resolution 2132 (LaMountain) would remove the 30-day voter registration requirement from the Rhode Island Constitution upon approval by voters.

Currently, the Rhode Island Constitution restricts voters to registering to vote at least 30 days before an election - a requirement that creates an unnecessary barrier for otherwise eligible voters.

This resolution would only remove the constitutional restriction of a 30-day voter registration period if voters approve it during the General Election in 2026. The General Assembly will still determine how to update State law – to shorten the voter registration period or, if it chooses, institute same-day registration. This will allow policymakers in future legislative cycles to determine the appropriate safeguards and implementation that best fit our election processes.

For some voters, the process would be very similar to what they have already experienced, as State law permits us to allow same-day registration for the President and Vice President. During the 2024 election, 9,187 people used this method of registering and voting. Additionally, for implementation purposes, requiring proof of residency and photo identification can serve as safeguards to manage and facilitate same-day registration.

Passing this resolution is an important first step to removing a constitutional restriction that has made Rhode Island's voter registration deadline the earliest in the country. Addressing this barrier will improve voter engagement and open the path for Rhode Island to join the 23 states and Washington, D.C. that have some form of same-day voter registration.

Senate Bill 2133 (LaMountain) would move Rhode Island's primary election day a week earlier to ensure the State complies with federal law on sending mail ballots to our military and overseas voters. The bill also adjusts other administrative dates and deadlines to accommodate this change.

This legislation will benefit voters, election officials, and, specifically, our military and overseas personnel. The Department of State has an obligation to comply with the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, which requires that we send mail ballots to military and overseas voters at least 45 days before an election. With our current primary date, we can barely meet this mail ballot requirement for the general election, and Rhode Island certainly would be unable to comply with the MOVE Act should a drawn-out recount

or election challenge occur. Passing this legislation will ensure our military and overseas personnel remain enfranchised in the most crucial part of the democratic process – voting.

Additionally, moving the primary date would give election officials more time to test voting equipment and prepare general election ballots. The availability of voting by mail and early voting ensures that voters who may be traveling during the earlier primary can still participate in the democratic process at a time that is convenient to them. Should this legislation pass, the Department of State is prepared to ensure the public is aware of this change before it takes effect in 2028.

Finally, **Senate Bill 2341 (LaMountain)** would reinstate and permanently codify the electronic return of mail ballots process for a limited group of voters: members of the military, overseas voters, and voters with disabilities.

A secure portal was established in 2024 for a limited group of voters to submit their mail ballots electronically. The portal has ensured that military and overseas voters, as well as individuals with disabilities, can cast their ballots while maintaining the security of our elections. Since then, this portal has been used without incident, thanks to its strict adherence to protocols, including independent security reviews and compliance with national cybersecurity standards.

For the limited subset of voters who are eligible to use the online portal to return their mail ballots, the portal allows them to vote independently and securely. For some voters with disabilities, this is the only voting method that enables them to vote independently and privately, without assistance. If the statutory language is not restored, these voters will revert to faxing or emailing their ballots to the Board of Elections – neither is secure and, for the most part, relies on obsolete technology. For election administrators, the secure online portal does not expose them to the cybersecurity risks associated with emailed ballots. Therefore, this legislation will ensure that our military and voters with disabilities can continue to securely and independently cast their ballots.

Overall, I urge this Committee and the full Senate to support the Department of State's legislative package, as these initiatives will enhance the administration of our elections, remove barriers to civic participation, ensure proper access for our most vulnerable constituents, and protect and maintain the integrity and authenticity of our elections.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at marias@sos.ri.gov.

Sincerely,



Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary