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Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections



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Anthony J. Mastantuono
Member

CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786

February 20, 2026

The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Cranston Board of Canvassers Support for S-2136 (Local Canvassing Board Appointments)

Dear Chairman LaMountain and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers to request the support of the Senate for **S-2136**, an act that would clarify and update several problematic gray areas in how local boards of canvassers are appointed, while adding critical election security and continuity of operations procedures and best practices. This election security bill is formally supported by the Cranston Board of Canvassers, RI Town and City Clerks' Association Elections Committee, RI Board of Elections, and the RI League of Cities and Towns. This legislation was also passed by the House of Representatives in 2025 with significant bi-partisan support.

S-2136 closes a number of loopholes that have caused documented delays and competing legal interpretations in how local boards of canvassers are appointed in numerous towns by clarifying the law. This includes defining what constitutes a "failure" of a local party chair to submit a list by adding a 30-day "ticking clock," and applying the same standard to the mayor or council president to submit a nomination for a vacancy to the council. It also clarifies which municipal leader is entitled to the nomination, removing ambiguity, ensuring board seats do not remain vacant for months, harming continuity of operations and vital, time-sensitive election functions.

As an additional election security provision, and for statewide consistency in local board operations, the bill also clarifies that fixed board terms should expire on a staggered basis, only in a non-election year on the first Monday of March, which was the original intent of the General Assembly when it created local boards of canvassers via various public laws enacted in the 1920s, to ensure terms aren't rotating out in the middle of an active election. Using cybersecurity best practices and controls, the bill establishes clear lines of communication for emergency contacts, and designates the Chief Local Election Official in each office who is authorized to notify the Secretary of State to add or remove user access for the Central Voter Registration System for all personnel in their office.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions on this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-780-3128, or via email at nlima@cranstonri.gov. We appreciate your support.

Very truly yours,

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers