

**Martha J. Tetreault, Chair**

**Giana Savastano, Manager**



**Jeffrey A. Gaulin, Clerk**

**John P. Cunningham, Member**

**CITY OF WOONSOCKET**  
**BOARD OF CANVASSERS AND REGISTRATION**  
169 MAIN ST P.O. BOX B  
WOONSOCKET RI 02895

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Members of Senate Judiciary

82 Smith St.

Rhode Island State House

Providence, RI 02903

**Re: Support for S-2136 – “An Act Relating to Elections – Local Canvassing Authorities”**

Dear Chairman LaMountain and Hon. Members of the Senate Judiciary,

I am writing in my capacity as an election administrator and on behalf of the Woonsocket Board of Canvassers in support of S-2136. The bill is presented on behalf of Rhode Island Town and City Clerk’s Association and reflects shared best practices that strengthen continuity of operations in election administration.

**Clarifying Areas of Ambiguity**

**S-2136** provides important clarification in two areas of the current board appointment process. First, it defines what constitutes a “failure” to submit a list under RIGL §17-8-1 by establishing a clear thirty-day window. This clarification is vital because prolonged vacancies on three-member boards can jeopardize the timely completion of key election tasks.

Second, the bill resolves uncertainty regarding which political party should be notified when a vacancy occurs and the two remaining members belong to different political parties. Election administrators – including myself- have grappled with this grey area, and the proposed language of **S-2136** codifies the commonsense practices already recommend and utilized by election administrators.

**Addressing Continuity of Operations**

In addition to clarifying the Board of Canvassers appointment process, the bill strengthens continuity of operations through updates to RIGL §17-8-2 and §17-8-5. Specifically, the bill directs city and town clerks to correct board member term expirations that are not compliant with current state law. It also requires the designation of a chief and alternate local election official to serve as primary contacts for each municipality, formalizing a structure that supports consistent and reliable communication.

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**Why Support**

**S-2136** cleans up the local board appointment statute by clarifying areas of ambiguity, while also bolstering the resiliency of local Boards through administrative improvements. Without these updates, municipalities may continue facing preventable disruptions – particularly during periods of increased election activity.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your **support** for **S-2136**.

Sincerely,

Giana Savastano

Manager

Woonsocket Board of Canvassers

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