



TOWN OF COVENTRY  
BOARD OF CANVASSERS  
1670 FLAT RIVER ROAD  
COVENTRY, RI 02816  
401-822-9150

February 24, 2026

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

**RE: Coventry Board of Canvassers Support for S-2147 (September Primary Labor Day Issue)**

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

The Coventry Board of Canvassers fully supports **S-2147**, an act introduced by Senator Burke on behalf of the RI Town and City Clerks' Association that moves the 2026 September Primary by one day, to Wednesday, due to Labor Day and related logistical, cost, and legal concerns. Moving the Primary to Wednesday, when it occurs during the week of Labor Day, has officially been supported in 2026 by the RI Board of Elections, RI League of Cities and Towns, and Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore, among others.

We have serious logistical concerns regarding the access and set up of our 17 polling locations for the Primary on a major federal holiday. Many of the Town's polling places are private clubs that likely have functions on Labor Day, making access for poll set up nearly impossible. Some of our other regular polling locations will likely be closed and unstaffed on Labor Day, which means we will struggle with access to these sites as well. Failure to properly set up polling locations can compromise the good conduct of the Primary, and cause polls to open late.

In addition to the logistical challenges, the Coventry Board of Canvassers also has concerns about the financial burden of conducting a Primary the day after a major federal holiday. Our polling locations are set up exclusively by Town staff from the Department of Public Works and the Board of Canvassers. Most of these employees are union members with a contract that requires them to be paid at a rate of double time and a half if they work on a holiday. We know that set up of many of our polling locations will in fact have to take place on Labor Day, which means a substantial, additional personnel cost to the Town.

Finally, Coventry holds early voting in our Board of Canvassers Office at the Town Hall Annex, but we also use this same space and same poll workers for separate, unrelated polls that are open on Primary Day. If the law does not change, we will have to hire *additional* poll worker personnel to staff early voting for Primary Day, and open separate voting sites in the same building.

Voters will be confused by having the unusual option of voting at either an early voting site from

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., or at their normal Primary Day polling place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Local election officials reported significant confusion from voters in the low turnout, day after Labor Day primaries of 2020 and 2023. There are also security and election integrity concerns that, in specific circumstances, could defeat safeguards intended to prevent attempted double voting, as our elections laws were not written to properly accommodate simultaneous early voting and Primary Day voting.

If you have any questions regarding this bill, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-822-9150, or via email at [registrar@coventryri.gov](mailto:registrar@coventryri.gov). We appreciate your consideration and support for this legislation.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MA', is positioned above the typed name.

Marcy A. Alves  
Registrar/ Director of Elections