



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

Rhode Island General Assembly – Senate Judiciary Committee
February 24, 2026
Support of S 2341

Testimony of Laura Hoch,
Associate Vice President of State Advocacy & Policy, National Multiple Sclerosis Society

Chair LaMountain, Vice Chair McKenney and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S 2341, An Act Relating to Elections – Mail Ballots, and how it may impact individuals living with multiple sclerosis (MS).

MS is an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Currently there is no cure. Symptoms vary from person to person and may include disabling fatigue, mobility challenges, cognitive changes and vision issues. An estimated 1 million people live with MS in the United States. Early diagnosis and treatment are critical to minimize disability. Significant progress is being made to achieve a world free of MS.

Most people with MS are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50 and may live with a physical disability for the rest of their lives. This can present challenges when visiting public spaces, especially those that are not adequately accessible, as well as make it more difficult to physically fill out forms. Many treatments for MS can also be immune-compromising, which means social distancing may be necessary for someone living with MS to protect their own health.

When the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation allowing for the use of electronic ballot return technology for those with disabilities, it guaranteed the right of those living with MS to vote independently from their own homes. Unfortunately, this law was sunsetted at the end of 2025 and as a result this electronic return is no longer available to those who rely on it.

We were happy to see the introduction of S 2341 and its companion, H 7007. We strongly urge this committee to move S 2341 forward and ensure access to accessible voting for all those living in Rhode Island. If you have any questions about our comments or recommendations, please contact Laura Hoch at laura.hoch@nmss.org or (475) 400-0870.

Sincerely,

Laura Hoch
AVP, State Advocacy & Policy
National Multiple Sclerosis Society