



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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February 25, 2026

The Honorable Senator Matthew L. LaMountain, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Support for S2341-A – An Act Relating to Elections – Mail Ballots

Honorable Chairman LaMountain and Members of the Committee,

This correspondence is in support of **Senate Bill S2341 Substitute A**, regarding the electronic return of ballots from military/overseas and disabled voters via the secure online portal, as proposed to be made permanent.

The secure portal utilized by the Department of State and the Board of Elections represents a significant enhancement in security for the electronic return of ballots, which previously consisted of return by facsimile or email. While the secure portal system is procured by the Secretary of State and used by that office for the *electronic delivery* of ballots to voters, the Board of Elections has a direct role in accessing the *electronic return* of the ballot from the voter. Below is a summary of the security features within the system and Board procedures that protect the contents, and the privacy of ballots submitted through the secure portal.

Secure Identity Verification

Before accessing a ballot, voters must authenticate their identity through the secure and encrypted portal. The RI Department of State's Election Division issues each voter a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) to verify their identity along with other personal information.

- All data is protected by SSL/TLS encryption, the highest standard for secure data transfer.
- The voter is only granted access to their specific ballot based on information verified against official voter registration records.

Protecting the Voter's Selections

The system is designed to securely separate the voter's identity from their marked ballot.

- Ballot marking occurs on the client-side within the voter's browser. The system does not collect or store the voter's specific candidate selections.
- For electronic returns, ballots are stored using *AWS Object Lock*, a technology that ensures that once a ballot is submitted, it cannot be changed, deleted, or altered.

- The digital submission mimics the traditional "double envelope" system, where the voter's identity is used only to verify eligibility before the ballot is separated and processed anonymously.

Physical Paper Record

The system is only a ballot delivery and marking tool. It does not tabulate votes.

- Every ballot cast results in a physical paper ballot being printed by an election official using a Ballot-on-Demand printer within the secure Board of Elections facility. This ensures there is always a human-readable record that can be audited or recounted by hand.
- Previously, ballots submitted by facsimile or email had to be duplicated onto official ballots by a pair of election officials, in order for the ballots to be readable by the tabulating equipment.
- The tabulation of these ballots is performed by Board of Elections officials on a DS850 high speed tabulator, exactly as all other mail ballots are tabulated.

Security

The secure portal is hosted on Amazon Web Services (AWS) GovCloud, meeting the highest federal security requirements.

- FedRAMP Certified: This infrastructure is used by the Department of Defense, FBI, and Department of Homeland Security.
- Continuous Monitoring: The system undergoes 24/7/365 testing by independent cybersecurity researchers to identify and block emerging threats.
- Independent Audits: The system vendor maintains SOC 2 Type II and ISO 27001 certifications, confirming adherence to the most stringent data privacy and security standards.

In the 2024 General Election, **1,849** U.S. military servicemembers and overseas U.S. citizens successfully utilized the portal to submit their ballot securely and electronically and not having to rely on the U.S. Mail. A total of **22** voters with disabilities successfully marked their mail ballots independently and returned it to the Board of Elections securely using the portal, and instead of relying on an assistant. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Miguel J. Nuñez
Executive Director
Rhode Island Board of Elections

cc: Senator Mark P. McKenney, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Adriana Carlucci, Committee Clerk
Kristen M. Silvia, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Senate President