

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sara Vieira and I am from Coventry.

I strongly urge you to oppose House Bill 7007 and its companion, Senate Bill 2341, which would allow disabled, military, and overseas voters to receive and return ballots electronically through systems approved by the Secretary of State, purportedly meeting federal cybersecurity standards like NIST guidelines.

While the intent to improve access for these vulnerable groups is commendable, these bills pose significant risks to Rhode Island's election integrity without adequate safeguards. Expanding electronic ballot transmission introduces vulnerabilities that could undermine public trust in our voting system.

Please read this article which was published January 16, 2026:

<https://blog.citp.princeton.edu/2026/01/16/internet-voting-is-insecure-and-should-not-be-used-in-public-elections/>

Key concerns include:

Cybersecurity and Fraud Risks

Electronic transmission, even with NIST compliance, is not foolproof. Cybersecurity experts have documented vulnerabilities in similar systems nationwide, including hacking risks, malware, or interception during transmission. Rhode Island's elections must prioritize verifiable, auditable paper trails—electronic returns could complicate audits and invite disputes, especially in close races.

Unequal Treatment and Implementation Challenges

These bills create a two-tiered system where some voters use electronic methods while others rely on traditional mail or in-person voting. This disparity could lead to perceptions of unfairness and legal challenges. Moreover, the Secretary of State's office may lack the resources to implement and monitor secure systems effectively, straining budgets and risking errors.

Potential for Manipulation and Reduced Transparency

Unlike physical ballots, electronic ones are harder to independently verify without robust, mandatory encryption and chain-of-custody protocols—elements not sufficiently detailed in the bills. Historical incidents, such as the 2020 SolarWinds hack affecting government systems, highlight how even "secure" platforms can fail, potentially allowing foreign interference or domestic fraud.

Better Alternatives Exist

Rhode Island can enhance access through secure mail ballots, extended early voting, or assisted in-person options without introducing digital risks. Bills like these divert focus from proven integrity measures, such as voter ID enhancements or audit expansions.

HB 7007 and S2341 prioritize convenience over security, potentially eroding confidence in our state. I respectfully request that the committees vote against these bills or amend them to require paper ballot equivalents and independent security audits.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available for questions or oral testimony.

Mrs. Sara Vieira