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CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786

April 7, 2026

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

RE: Cranston Canvassing Authority Support for S-3112, S-3113, S-3114, S-3201, S-2131, S-2490, S-3143

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

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Canvassing Authority to request your support for seven election bills now before the Senate Committee on Judiciary. The Board of Canvassers voted unanimously to **support S-3112, S-3113, S-3114, S-3201, S-2131, and S-2490.**

While the Board has not yet had an opportunity to vote on **S-3143**, I am authorized in the interim by the Board, and by Chairman McDonough, to also submit testimony on behalf of the Canvassing Authority office in **support** of this legislation, until such time as the Board has an opportunity to formally consider it at a future meeting.

S-3143, introduced on behalf of the Secretary of State and sponsored by Senate President Lawson, is an important bill designed to protect and preserve the existing voting rights of all Rhode Islanders, and serve as a hedge against potential future disenfranchisement. This bill, as written, strikes a careful balance between protecting local boards of canvassers against frivolous actions – including by allowing us to maintain our normal election operations without the burden of preclearance requirements – while also ensuring voters have inherent rights to protect themselves against blatant discrimination in election practices and that voting populations who face language access barriers are likewise not disenfranchised en masse by those barriers. The legislation’s provisions to ensure fewer provisional ballot voters are disenfranchised by down-ballot disqualifications, when they would otherwise be eligible to cast legitimate votes for multiple offices, is also an improvement which would improve the Board’s provisional adjudication process after each election.

S-3113, which was introduced on behalf of the state Board of Elections, corrects a flaw in state law that establishes different deadlines for federal candidates, as opposed to state and local candidates. Correcting this flaw is important to ensure fair and accurate recounts and consistent election administration practices.

S-3114 is legislation also introduced on behalf of the state Board of Elections that tightens up rules and procedures for the handling of mail ballots, which the Board of Canvassers strongly believes is important to ensure election integrity. Rhode Island is one of the only states in the country, and the only state in New England, with no established laws regarding the handling and collection of voters’ ballots by third parties, and this bill strikes a balance between voter access and election integrity by adding new safeguards while preserving voting rights. The Board believes this legislation adds reasonable safeguards to the mail ballot process to ensure it is not abused, including to ensure candidates and campaigns cannot possess, en masse, the live ballots of voters.

S-3201, a bill introduced on behalf of the Secretary of State, would expand access to the nomination signature process by allowing for voters with disabilities or out-of-state and deployed military or overseas voters (as an

example) to sign nomination papers for candidates, which under current law can only be done in-person and is inaccessible to many voters. Voters can already register, update their registration, and apply for mail ballots online securely and easily, so it makes sense to establish a similar process for signature gathering. This process would also remove significant burden, over time, from local boards of canvassers in the manual receipt and review of paper nomination forms, while preserving them as an option for candidates to still use.

S-3112 improves election security, integrity, and public access to observation of the mail ballot application and mail ballot certification processes, and was introduced on behalf of the state Board of Elections. While mail voting in Rhode Island is already secure, we support this common-sense additional security measure.

S-2131 clarifies that the 50-foot no campaign buffer zone inside and outside of polling locations applies to early voting. While this is already our practice, a lack of clarity in state law could subject that practice to challenge. The House passed this legislation last session, in 2025, and hope it may be considered for passage by both chambers in 2026. The Board supports the addition of reasonable clarifying language, as suggested in testimony from the RI Town and City Clerks' Association, that clarifies it is not applicable to municipal officials who must conduct official business in the same building where early voting takes place – such as elected town clerks or other officials who have job-related duties within this zone, provided that they are not actively campaigning.

S-2490 would expand voter access by creating opportunities for voters to register or update their registration information when applying for hunting and fishing licenses. We believe making it convenient and easy for eligible voters to register to vote and keep their information current is important for election integrity, and providing a chance to do so when interacting with state agencies – which is already done in several agencies – is a sound policy proposal that helps keep the voter rolls more accurate while also reducing the burden for voters.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions on this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-780-3128, or via email at nlima@cranstonri.gov. We appreciate your support.

Very truly yours,



Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers