



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

January 25, 2024

Honorable Jacquelyn M. Baginski, Chair  
House Committee on Innovation, Internet, and Technology

RE: H7159 - An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government – Departments of State Government

Dear Chair Baginski,

I write this letter in support of H7159, legislation that will require State government websites to comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 (WCAG 2.2) in accordance with the Americans Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements by July 1, 2026.

As Secretary of State, my priority is ensuring the information Rhode Islanders need is accessible – whether it's to do business, to vote, or simply to interact with their government. The RI Department of State works to enfranchise voters by making election procedures more transparent and accessible to all voters, as well as to ensure entrepreneurs can easily start their businesses in our state. This means we have to ensure every voter, regardless of their circumstances or background, can confidently be aware of an upcoming election or how to apply for a mail ballot online. And simultaneously, that new businesses can obtain the appropriate information they need and file their annual report online.

The Department of State supports all initiatives that will ensure greater accessibility. That is why, since July of 2023, our Office has utilized *SiteImprove* software that measures compliance with WCAG 2.2 and provides quality assurance of content on the website. In addition, *SiteImprove* provides our staff with guidelines and training on improving accessibility on our website and regularly scans our website to ensure we follow WCAG 2.2 standards. Furthermore, in September of 2023, our Office completed a manual review of the Department of State's website and the voter information page to address any issues that automated scanning may not pick up, and we are currently working on scheduling another review in the next two to three months.

Department of State staff review the findings of the weekly *SiteImprove* scan to determine how our compliance score may improve. Currently, our accessibility score is 85%, which is an industry average – but we are committed to reaching a goal of 90% and above.

Overall, I urge this Committee to support this legislation, as it will ensure that all State websites grant the public equal access to the information and services they need.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Arias, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, at [marias@sos.ri.gov](mailto:marias@sos.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore  
Secretary of State

cc: Honorable Members of the House Committee on Innovation, Internet, and Technology  
The Honorable Camille Vella-Wilkinson