



State of Rhode Island

**Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State**

**Gregg M. Amore, Secretary of State**

February 27, 2024

Honorable Robert Craven, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary

RE: In support of H7447 An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses - Threats and Extortion

Dear Chair Craven,

I write this letter in support of House Bill 7447, legislation that will amend the *Threats to Public Officials* statute to include election officials and poll workers. This will ensure that election officials and poll workers, who carry out the essential functions and duties of our democracy, are protected against threats, intimidation, and harassment.

As Secretary of State, one of my top priorities has been to increase platforms for civic engagement, specifically working with youth across the state, informing them of the electoral process and how they can get involved – volunteering or working as a poll worker is certainly one of the many avenues to do so. We should guarantee to all those who help in the administration of our elections that they are protected from the consequences of misinformation which has led to senseless acts of violence.

For decades, public officials and public servants have been protected by law from threats, intimidation, and harassment. However, election officials and poll workers have not been included, and unfortunately, since 2020, have been subjected to harassment and threats all over the country. For instance, election officials in Washington and Oregon have received letters containing fentanyl – a drug found to be deadly. Meanwhile, election workers in Arizona and Nevada have seen more than half of their election officials leave the profession due to the nature of the threats they receive.

Since 2020, fourteen states have enacted laws specifically seeking protections for election officials and poll workers. It is evident that this legislation is critical across the country, and we should address the issue in our state to reassure our election officials and poll workers that they will, at a minimum, be protected from violence and harassment.

Therefore, I urge this committee to support House Bill 7447, as it is imperative that we protect the people who are on the frontlines administering our elections – ensuring our democracy is kept alive so that all eligible Rhode Islanders can cast their vote and have confidence in the way we run our elections.

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 Judiciary  
The Honorable Matthew Dawson

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