



**Testimony in Opposition of An Act Relating to Elections – Mail Ballots: HB7071  
House Committee on State and Government Elections**

**January 23, 2024**

**Nina Harrison, Policy Director, The Economic Progress Institute**

**The Economic Progress Institute** opposes Rep. Brien’s HB7071, an act to reduce the permitted timeframe for early voting from 20 days to 14 days (excluding weekends).

Voter participation and civic engagement are crucial to the success of our democracy. Early voting helps more people to vote by reducing long lines on Election Day that may discourage voters from exercising their right, or make it impossible if they must return to work. Early voting can also reduce burdens on election officials and staff. Early in-person voting in RI was signed into law in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic, which led to 29% of votes being cast in person before Election Day<sup>1</sup>. There has also been a nationwide trend over the last decade of expanding access to early voting.

HB6273 would make it more difficult for Rhode Islanders to exercise their constitutional right to vote and cause our elections to be less democratic and less inclusive. If elected officials truly seek to represent Rhode Islanders, they should aspire to be elected by as many voters as possible. The Economic Progress Institute strongly opposes HB6273.

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<sup>1</sup> [Rhode Island voting: Early voting the latest change to election laws \(providencejournal.com\)](https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2020/07/27/rhode-island-voting-early-voting-the-latest-change-to-election-laws/3272170002)