



State of Rhode Island

Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State

Gregg M. Amore, *Secretary of State*

March 26, 2024

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley, Chair
House Committee on State Government & Elections

RE: In support of H7476 – An Act Relating to Elections – Statewide Referenda Elections

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write in support of House Bill 7476, legislation that amends state ballot questions to be written in plain language at an eighth-grade reading level.

The Department of State prioritizes increasing civic engagement and participation throughout all communities in this state. Thus, it is imperative that voters not only have access to the ballot but also understand the questions on it so they can appropriately decide what they are voting for or against.

State law allows our office to shorten questions, but it does not require our office to make them understandable. This legislation would codify that ballot questions be written in plain language at an eighth-grade reading level for all future elections. While this bill only refers to State questions, we can use it to assist cities and towns with their local questions.

I urge this Committee and the full House to support this legislation.

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.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on State Government & Elections