



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 H7662 – An Act Relating to Elections – Registration of Voters

Dear Chair Shanley,

I write in support of House Bill 7662, legislation that would allow unaffiliated voters to remain unaffiliated after voting in a primary election.

Currently, in order to remain unaffiliated after voting in a primary, voters must remember to fill out a disaffiliation form on their way out of the polling place. Unfortunately, many voters forget to complete that step, so when the next primary approaches, they are unaware that they were automatically affiliated with a specific party - potentially disenfranchising them from the process, especially if they would prefer to vote in a different primary. The disaffiliation process is particularly difficult for mail ballot voters, as unlike voters who cast a ballot at a polling place, they are not provided with the disaffiliation forms in their mailed ballot due to rules and regulations.

The Department of State prioritizes increasing civic engagement and participation throughout all communities in this state. 47% of Rhode Island voters are registered as unaffiliated, by far the highest group of voters in the state. Many of these voters refuse to vote in primaries because they do not want to be affiliated with a political party, which is why we believe voters should be able to remain unaffiliated after voting in a primary - as we should do everything in our power to enfranchise voters.

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
The Honorable Patricia A. Serpa