



## CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Renay Brooks Omisore, Chairperson

Mercedes "Betty" Bernal, Clerk

Rochelle Lee, Commissioner

March 25, 2024

The Honorable Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

### **RE: Providence Board of Canvassers Support for H-7756 (3-Day Mail Ballot Application Transmittal)**

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee.

I am writing on behalf of the Providence Board of Canvassers to request the support of the House for **H-7756**, an act that would allow a three-day transmittal period for mail ballot applications received via USPS mail after the 21-day deadline. This bill is supported by a **unanimous** vote of both the Rhode Island Town and City Clerks' Association and the Rhode Island Board of Elections, and by the Secretary of State, among other organizations. I will note that both legislative chambers overwhelmingly voted in support of a similar bill in 2023.

Because local boards of canvassers must reject hundreds of late applications, voters are being **wrongfully disenfranchised**. The remedy is demonstrably nonsensical: upon rejection for being received past the deadline – which is a cumbersome and labor-intensive process for local boards to process – the local board must mail a rejection letter, which includes an "emergency" application with it for the voter to complete and return, with limited time remaining. However, this emergency application contains nearly identical language as the "late" mail ballot application, which is already in possession of the local board and could have been processed. Each election cycle, hundreds of mail ballot applications are placed in the mail by voters in the days ahead of the deadline, but due to mail delivery cycles, most are received late, in the three days following the deadline.

Local boards of canvassers should be permitted to accept and process these applications, because there is still more than two weeks for the Secretary of State to mail the voter the ballot they requested, which is ample time for the voter to receive and return it. The 20-day deadline established by law does make sense – but there absolutely should be a window where applications should be accepted. A similar window, of five days, **already exists in state law** for the transmittal and receipt of voter registration forms past the 30-day deadline. Election officials should not have to reject mail ballot applications on such a trivial – and operationally unnecessary – technicality.

If you have any questions on this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-680-5530, or via email at [mnarducci@providenceri.gov](mailto:mnarducci@providenceri.gov). We appreciate your consideration and support for this legislation.

*Michael P. Narducci*

Michael Narducci  
Administrator of Elections

### BOARD OF CANVASSERS

Providence City Hall | 25 Dorrance Street Room 102 Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
401-680-5525 ph | 401-421-9397 fax  
[www.providenceri.gov](http://www.providenceri.gov)