



CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND
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March 14, 2025

The House Committee on State Government and Elections
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support of House Bill 5381

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

As Election Administrator for the City of Newport and on behalf of Chairwoman Sharon Connors and the Newport Canvassing Authority, I am writing to strongly encourage you to **support** passage of House Bill 5381, which was introduced on behalf of the Secretary of State and has unanimous support of the State Board of Elections and the RI Town & City Clerks Association. This bill addresses a number of updates to election administration that would help both voters, candidates and election officials.

First, it would move the date of the statewide primary from eight Tuesdays before the general election to the ninth Tuesday before general. This is a proactive move because Rhode Island's current date leaves a very short window between the primary and a federally required date to produce and mail general election ballots to military and overseas voters 45 days before the general election. Currently, if we had a recount or another issue that delays final certification of the primary, we would miss that federally required deadline and would open Rhode Island up to a lawsuit from the Justice Department, who would force us to make this change.

Second, in years were the primary day falls immediately after Labor Day, this bill would move the election to that Wednesday. This is a huge administrative help as we need the day before to prepare and municipal offices and most polling places are closed on Labor Day.

Third, this bill would move deadlines tied in law to the primary and general election dates to account for changing the date of the primary and provide more time for the collection of signatures on nomination papers.

The Newport Canvassing Authority urges you to support passage of House Bill 5381 and thanks you for your consideration.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important legislation.

Respectfully submitted,



Hugh Moren
Election Administrator



Sharon Connors
Chair, Newport Canvassing Authority

CC: Sharon Connors
J. Clement "Bud" Cicilline
Donato D'Andrea
Mary Moniz
Mary Ann Marin