

Kirk McDonough
Chairperson

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections



Quilcia I. Moronta
Member

VACANT
Member

**CRANSTON BOARD OF CANVASSERS
869 PARK AVE
CRANSTON, RI 02910-2786**

March 15, 2025

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

RE: Cranston Board of Canvassers Support for H-5518 (Adding Newspaper Ads for Early Voting)

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

I am writing on behalf of the Cranston Board of Canvassers to request the support of the House for **H-5518**, an act that would require local boards of canvassers to advertise early voting twice in a local newspaper, among other reforms to outdated newspaper ads and municipal website postings. This bill is supported by the Cranston Board of Canvassers, RI Town and City Clerks' Association, RI Board of Elections, and RI League of Cities and Towns.

H-5518 mandates that local boards advertise early voting both in a newspaper and on their municipal website, prior to the start of and during the early voting period for every election. Current state law has **no** requirement to advertise the dates, hours, and location of early voting, which this act seeks to remedy. In order to avoid adding financial burdens to local election offices, as a trade-off, the bill also modifies some existing newspaper legal ads, resulting in a net-neutral cost for election offices in their extremely limited voter outreach budgets.

It also gives local boards of canvassers the option to advertise the registration deadline on their websites instead of a newspaper, but does not eliminate the newspaper ad entirely. Current law requires notices of the location and hours that the local board will receive voter registrations on the deadline day, which is almost exclusively a Sunday, but only if different from their normal operating hours. This is not a critically important advertisement, and is wholly underutilized due to the modernization of the voter registration process many years ago. Most registrations are from the DMV, not in-person. Typically, our office staff will see **no one** on the deadline day.

A previous version of this bill passed **both** the House and the Senate. The bill has since been modified to add protections for voters with disabilities, as recommended by several advocacy organizations in their testimony.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions on this legislation, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 401-780-3128, or via email at nlima@cranstonri.gov. We appreciate your support.

Very truly yours,

Nicholas J. Lima
Registrar / Director of Elections

Cc: Kirk McDonough, Chairperson, Cranston Board of Canvassers