

2016 -- H 7249

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

Introduced By: Representatives Ajello, Tanzi, Handy, Blazejewski, and Marcello

Date Introduced: January 20, 2016

Referred To: House Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 17-19-1, 17-19-3, 17-19-21, 17-19-24.1, 17-19-37.1, 17-19-39.1,  
2 17-19-43 and 17-19-49 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-19 entitled "Conduct of Election and  
3 Voting Equipment, and Supplies" are hereby amended to read as follows:

4 **17-19-1. Definitions.** -- As used in this chapter, except as otherwise required by the  
5 context:

6 (1) "Computer ballot" means the paper ballot prepared by the office of the secretary of  
7 state for use in conjunction with the optical scan precinct count system or the voting equipment  
8 precinct count system then in place and procured in accordance with this chapter;

9 (2) "Voting equipment" means an optical scan precinct count voting system or the voting  
10 equipment precinct count system then in place and procured in accordance with this chapter,  
11 related memory device, all related hardware and software, accessible voting systems required by  
12 federal law, and voting booths;

13 (3) "Warden" includes moderator and vice versa;

14 (4) "Candidate" means any individual who has qualified under law to have his or her  
15 name appear on the ballot for nomination for election or election to office;

16 (5) "Write-in candidate" means any individual receiving votes or seeking election to  
17 office by virtue of having irregular ballots cast for him or her pursuant to § 17-19-31;

18 (6) "Public office" means any state, municipal, school, or district office or other position  
19 that is filled by popular election, except political party offices which shall mean any state, city,

1 town, ward, or representative or senatorial district committee office of a political party or delegate  
2 to a political party convention, or any similar office; and

3 (7) A "Vote" shall be any mark made with the appropriate marking device within the  
4 optech ballot voting area between the head and tail of the arrow on the computer ballot next to the  
5 party, candidate, write-in candidate, or question, as is applicable, for whom the voter casts his or  
6 her ballot, except as provided in [§§17-19-37.4 and 17-20-24](#).

7 **17-19-3. Voting equipment and services -- Specifications.** -- (a) The office of secretary  
8 of state shall develop, from time to time, and, in coordination with the general assembly for the  
9 purpose of funding procurement, submit specifications to the department of administration that  
10 the department of administration shall utilize in procuring voting equipment, voting systems, and  
11 services related thereto in accordance with this chapter and chapter 2 of title 37 of the general  
12 laws. These specifications and requests for proposals for the options of purchasing, leasing to  
13 own, or renting precinct count voting systems that utilize technologies, methods, and equipment  
14 considered reasonable best practices for the state and in compliance with all laws, and for a full-  
15 service contract for such voting systems, shall be constructed and shall operate in a manner that  
16 meets the following minimum requirements:

17 (1) It shall enable the voter to:

18 (i) Mark his or her ballot and cast his or her vote in secrecy;

19 (ii) Vote for all candidates of political parties or organizations, and for, or against,  
20 questions as submitted;

21 (iii) Vote for as many persons for an office as the voter is lawfully entitled to vote for,  
22 but no more; and

23 (iv) Vote on any question the voter may have the right to vote on;

24 (2) It shall prevent the voter from voting for the same person more than once for the  
25 same office;

26 (3) The voting equipment shall allow the voter to cast one vote, thereby allowing the  
27 voter to vote for all the presidential electors of a party by a clear and unambiguous means;  
28 provided, that means shall be furnished by which the voter can cast a vote in part for the  
29 candidates for presidential electors of one party, and in part for those of one or more other parties,  
30 or in part or in whole, for persons not nominated by any party;

31 (4) The precinct counting system shall meet the following specifications:

32 (i) Vote counting, including absentee ballots, shall be performed through the use of  
33 automated electronic equipment;

34 (ii) All vote counting shall be performed on equipment supplied as part of the bid. The

1 system shall not require the use of non-supplied equipment to count ballots or tabulate results;

2 (iii) There shall be privacy enclosures in which a voter may mark his or her ballot or  
3 otherwise cast his or her vote in secret;

4 (iv) There shall be a device located in each polling place that can record the vote count  
5 and tally the vote count in that polling place and that can produce a printed tally of all races  
6 contained on said ballot in human, readable form. The device shall automatically print a "zero  
7 report" at the beginning of the day when the device is activated. The device that receives ballots  
8 for counting shall have an external counter indicating the number of ballots received. The actual  
9 vote tally shall be capable of being performed only by election officials and shall not be visible  
10 during the actual voting process. Each recording device shall ensure the security of voted ballots  
11 and ease of access;

12 (v) As part of the voting process, there shall be created a physical ballot showing the  
13 votes cast by an individual voter that is capable of being hand counted so that electronic-recorded  
14 device totals can be checked for accuracy for auditing purposes, or in the event that a recount,  
15 conducted pursuant to this chapter, indicates a discrepancy in the number of votes cast in an  
16 election or ballot question, or where necessary to ascertain voter intent as provided herein, or to  
17 otherwise ensure implementation of a voter's exercise of their right to vote;

18 (vi) There shall be a device at each polling place to receive the physical audit trail of  
19 ballots cast and that shall securely store the ballots and have the capability of restricting access to  
20 the ballots only to authorize officials;

21 (vii) In the event of loss of electrical power, the polling place vote count shall be stored  
22 on an ongoing basis in media that will retain the count of the votes cast to that point in time for a  
23 period of no less than five (5) years;

24 (viii) The polling place vote counts shall be stored on a stable media that may be easily  
25 transported and that may be accessed and counted by an electronic device so that state, city,  
26 and/or town vote totals can be electronically calculated by combining individual polling place  
27 totals. It shall not be necessary to enter individual polling place totals by, and into, a central  
28 computer or device for the purpose of producing the state, city, and/or town totals, but rather the  
29 electronic media on which the polling place totals are stored shall be directly readable and  
30 accessible by a regional or central device;

31 (ix) There shall be a device that has the capability to electronically read the storage  
32 device upon which the individual polling place totals are stored and that shall produce a  
33 combined total for all races, which total can be printed in easily readable and legible form in a  
34 format prescribed by the state board of elections;

1 (x) The system provided shall allow the secretary of state to have the capability to design  
2 the ballot format;

3 (xi) The system shall provide a capability for the state, without the use of outside  
4 services, to set up and prepare the counting devices to total an election; and

5 (xii) The system must be capable of receiving voted ballots without counting when  
6 without power and must provide for securely storing uncounted ballots;

7 (5) The following minimum equipment shall be required for the state:

8 (i) There shall be a minimum number of units to permit counting to be conducted in each  
9 polling place within the state with a reserve of equipment on hand;

10 (ii) There shall be a sufficient number of voting booths for each precinct to  
11 accommodate voters as determined in this title;

12 (iii) The number of polling place units and voting booths must be sufficient to permit the  
13 election to run smoothly without excessive waiting of voters;

14 (iv) If there is an increase in the number of polling places statewide during the term of  
15 the contract, the vendor will supply additional polling place units and voting booths at a cost  
16 proportional to the cost of the initial units pro rated for the balance of the agreement years;

17 (v) (A) There shall be high-speed, absentee vote tabulating equipment. These tabulators,  
18 as a whole, must be capable of counting absentee ballots at a reasonable best practices rate. The  
19 tabulators shall utilize the same ballots used in the polling place;

20 (B) This system shall have the following capabilities in connection with the counting of  
21 ballots and producing results:

22 (I) This system shall be able to read the media from the polling place units on which  
23 polling place results are stored and shall be able to compile polling place results producing a  
24 ballot total for each race; and

25 (II) This system shall be capable of producing and printing out ballot totals on a polling-  
26 place-by-polling-place basis for each race, and shall be capable of producing a final total and  
27 subtotals of all races from all races and polling places in the state. All totals must be able to be  
28 produced at any time, based upon the number of polling places counted up to that point in time,  
29 and these printout results shall state the number of precincts counted and the percentage of  
30 precincts reporting;

31 (vi) There shall be all equipment necessary to program the system and erase the memory  
32 devices;

33 (vii) Reasonable best-practices tabulating equipment shall be located in each of the  
34 thirty-nine (39) local boards of canvassers and the central tabulation equipment shall be located at

1 the state board of elections. The state board of elections, in conjunction with the service contract  
2 vendor, no less than thirty (30) days prior to an election, shall test the tabulation system to be  
3 utilized for the election and determine whether regional and/or central tabulation is adequate, and  
4 if regional tabulation is required, so implement it. The tabulation system shall have the following  
5 capabilities in connection with the counting of ballots and producing results:

6 (A) This system shall be able to read the media from the polling place units on which  
7 polling place results are stored and shall be able to compile polling place results producing a  
8 ballot total for each race;

9 (B) This system shall be capable of producing and printing out ballot totals on a polling-  
10 place-by-polling-place basis for each race and shall be capable of producing a final total and  
11 subtotal of all races from all races and polling places in the state;

12 (C) All totals must be able to be produced at any time based upon the number of polling  
13 places counted up to that point in time, and the printout results shall state the number of precincts  
14 counted and the percentage of precincts reporting; and

15 (D) This system shall be capable of transferring information gathered from the precincts  
16 and, if regional and/or central tabulation sites are utilized, the system shall be capable of  
17 transferring information gathered at any regional or central sites utilized by the thirty-nine (39)  
18 local boards of canvassers;

19 (6) All necessary programming and accumulation software shall be provided to run the  
20 election system in accordance with the required specifications as well as all necessary and  
21 required modules. Any software updates during the term of the agreement shall not be charged to  
22 the state;

23 (7) The vendor of the precinct-count system shall provide written proof of compliance  
24 with federal standards then in place and administered by the designated federal agency or  
25 organization from an independent testing company and this written proof must be on file with the  
26 office of the secretary of state and the state board of elections;

27 (8) The vendor shall also provide the following information to be included in the  
28 vendor's bid proposal:

29 (i) (A) An audited financial statement covering the previous five (5) years, and if the  
30 vendor is not the manufacturer of the equipment, both the agent and manufacturer must submit an  
31 audited financial statement covering the previous five (5) years with the bid;

32 (B) In the event that either the vendor, agent, or manufacturer has been in existence for  
33 less than five (5) years, that entity must submit an audited financial statement for each and every  
34 full year that they have been in existence;

1 (ii) Proof of experience in the field of elections including, but not limited to, years of  
2 experience in this field and experience with a jurisdiction having the same needs as the state of  
3 Rhode Island; and

4 (iii) Names and addresses of the support organizations that will provide support of all  
5 equipment.

6 (b) The full-service plan shall include the following services, but, at the discretion of the  
7 office of the secretary of state, shall not be limited to the following services:

8 (1) Computer coding and layout of all ballots to be used in each election under contract,  
9 including the printing of the ballot and the preparation of the ballot-reading device to ensure that  
10 the ballots are compatible with the ballot-reading device. Subsequent thereto, the state board of  
11 elections shall be responsible for the following:

12 (2) Testing of each unit for logic and accuracy;

13 (3) Testing of each programmed memory device;

14 (4) Set up of each precinct-count unit at each polling place;

15 (5) Maintenance of all precinct-count units;

16 (6) Training of poll workers;

17 (7) On-site election night staff at the central tabulation location and any other locations  
18 as may be determined by the state board to receive and transmit election results;

19 (8) On-site election day field technicians to respond to repair calls;

20 (9) Providing the following equipment and supplies:

21 (i) Secrecy covers for voted ballots;

22 (ii) Demonstration ballots;

23 (iii) Precision-cut shell program ballots ready for printing with timing marks;

24 (iv) Marking pens;

25 (v) Ballot transfer cases;

26 (vi) Envelopes for mailing and receiving absentee ballots; and

27 (vii) Printer ribbons, paper tape rolls, and seals.

28 (c) Any bid proposal by an offeror for a precinct-count system and a full-service  
29 agreement for a precinct count system that does not conform in all respects to the requirements of  
30 subdivisions (a)(1) -- (b)(9)(vii) of this section may be accepted by the office of the secretary of  
31 state with the consent of the department of administration. The office of the secretary of state  
32 shall memorialize the acceptance of any bid proposal that does not conform with the requirements  
33 of subsections (a)(1) -- (b)(9)(vii) of this section in each instance of such non-conformance.

34 (d) The office of the secretary of state periodically shall conduct a review of the election

1 system, provide a report to the general assembly, and shall be responsible for establishing  
2 minimum requirements and specifications for the procurement of voting equipment and services.

3 (e) The board of elections shall specify, by promulgated regulation, all programming  
4 standards of the voting equipment that relate to the equipment's acceptance or rejection of ballots,  
5 or of particular votes on a ballot, due to overvoting, undervoting, or any other reason.

6 **17-19-21. Arrangement of polling places -- Election officials -- Police officers. --** (a)

7 The polling places shall be established, equipped, and furnished with the paraphernalia necessary  
8 for the conduct of each election, by the officers and in the manner provided by this title. There  
9 shall be placed, outside each polling place, a clearly marked sign to be provided by the state  
10 board of elections indicating the location of the polling place. This sign shall be of a conspicuous  
11 nature and shall be visible from the street. The area within which the balloting is conducted shall  
12 be arranged with a guard rail having one place for entrance and another place for exit. The rail  
13 shall be placed so that only persons admitted inside the rail can approach within five (5) feet of  
14 any voting booth or optical scan precinct count unit. The voting booths and optical scan precinct  
15 count unit shall be placed so that the warden and the clerk shall always have a clear view of the  
16 front of each voting booth and the optical scan unit. It shall be the duty of the warden to direct the  
17 location of the voting equipment in relation to the guard rail and the posts of the warden and the  
18 clerk so as to enforce the requirements of this section.

19 (b) One bipartisan pair of supervisors, the clerk, and the warden shall be stationed, in  
20 that order, along the guard rail so that a voter desiring to cast a ballot will pass first in front of the  
21 bipartisan pair, then in front of the clerk, and finally in front of the warden. A second bipartisan  
22 pair shall be stationed within the guard rail and shall be available to relieve the first bipartisan  
23 pair or the clerk and to assist voters within the limits prescribed by this title. The second  
24 bipartisan pair, when not engaged in the preceding duties, shall watch the voters in and about the  
25 voting equipment and shall call to the attention of the warden any violation, or circumstance  
26 suggesting a violation, of the provisions of this title.

27 (c) The chiefs of police of cities and towns, and town sergeants of towns having no chief  
28 of police, shall detail a certain number of police officers to each polling place as may be  
29 requested by the local board. The police officers shall preserve order at each polling place and  
30 within two hundred (200) feet of the polling place. It shall be the duty of every police officer or  
31 other peace officer or town or police constable to arrest without warrant any person detected in  
32 the act of violating the provisions of this chapter, but no arrest shall be made without the approval  
33 of the warden.

34 (d) The election officials provided in subsections (a) and (b) of this section shall be

1 provided with, and shall be required to prominently display upon their persons, identification  
2 badges that shall designate that person as an election official. Powers and duties of all designated  
3 election officials at polls shall be posted in a conspicuous and prominent location within the  
4 voting place, preferably with the posted sample ballot.

5 (e) Any person may enter a polling place to observe its operation and take notes, provided  
6 that the person does not disturb the conduct of the voting process or engage in electioneering  
7 activity otherwise prohibited by this title.

8 **17-19-24.1. Provisional voting under the Help America Vote Act of 2002.** -- (a) If an  
9 individual's name does not appear on the certified voting list as provided for in § 17-19-24(b) and  
10 the individual is eligible to vote in an election for federal office or an election official asserts that  
11 the individual is not eligible to vote in the district in which the individual desires to vote, then the  
12 individual shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot as provided in Section 302 of the Help  
13 America Vote Act (P.L. 107-252) [42 U.S.C. § 15481] and this section.

14 (b) Provisional ballots provided for in this section shall be cast in accordance with rules  
15 and regulations which shall be promulgated by the state board of elections in accordance with the  
16 Help America Vote Act (P.L. 107-252) [42 U.S.C. § 15301 et seq.].

17 (c) If an individual casting the ballot is a registered voter in the city/town and precinct in  
18 which they voted, a provisional ballot shall be counted as a full ballot.

19 (d) If the individual is a registered voter in the city/town and proper congressional  
20 district, but not the precinct in which they voted, the ballot will be counted for all federal, state-  
21 wide, city-wide or town-wide elections and for all ballot questions.

22 (e) In all other instances, where the individual is not a registered voter in the city/town or  
23 is in the wrong congressional district in which the individual cast their ballot, the ballot shall be  
24 counted for all elections and ballot questions for which the person is qualified, by reason of  
25 residency, to vote.

26 (f) To the extent not prohibited by federal law:

27 (1) The name, designation of party affiliation, street address, city or town, and previous  
28 name and address of an applicant for a provisional ballot, the reason for the provisional ballot,  
29 and the disposition of the provisional ballot shall be public; and

30 (2) The determination process for the disposition of a provisional ballot shall be  
31 conducted in public.

32 (g) Any person who is given a provisional ballot because they are first-time voters who  
33 directly registered by mail and failed to provide the identifying information required by the Help  
34 America Vote Act at the time of registration or prior to their vote shall have forty-eight (48) hours

1 from the close of the polls to provide the necessary identification in order to have their vote  
2 counted.

3 (h) Between fifteen (15) and forty (40) days before a statewide election, the board shall  
4 send a written notice by first-class mail to every mail registrant who failed to provide the  
5 identifying information required by the Help America Vote Act at the time of registration or prior  
6 to their vote. The notice shall inform the registrant of their need to provide identification in order  
7 to have their vote counted, and describe the types of identification that are acceptable. The notice  
8 shall be written in such a manner as to ensure ease of comprehension by the recipients.

9 **17-19-37.1. Recount eligibility -- Candidates for public office. --** A candidate for  
10 election or nomination for election to public office shall be eligible to request a recount of the  
11 votes cast in his or her race pursuant to the following:

12 (1) In those races in which a single candidate is elected a candidate who trails the  
13 winning candidate may request a recount of the votes cast at each precinct by a manual re-feeding  
14 of the computer ballots cast in said race into the optical scan voting equipment provided that the  
15 candidate shall trail the winning candidate by less than the following number of votes:

16 (a) In those races where the number of votes cast is less than or equal to twenty thousand  
17 (20,000) the candidate requesting the recount shall trail the winning candidate by two percent  
18 (2%) or two hundred (200) votes, whichever is less; in those races where the number of votes cast  
19 is between twenty thousand one (20,001) and one hundred thousand (100,000) the candidate  
20 requesting the recount shall trail the winning candidate by one percent (1%) or five hundred (500)  
21 votes, whichever is less; and, in those races where more than one hundred thousand (100,000)  
22 votes are cast the candidate requesting the recount shall trail the winning candidate by one-half of  
23 one percent (1/2%) or one thousand five hundred (1,500) votes, whichever is less.

24 (b) For the purpose of determining recount eligibility, as prescribed in subsections (1)(a)  
25 and (3) of this section, the number of votes cast in a race shall include the votes cast for  
26 candidates and irregular ballots cast pursuant to § 17-19-31.

27 (2) In those races in which more than one candidate is elected a candidate who trails the  
28 winning candidate may request a recount of the votes cast at each precinct by a manual re-feeding  
29 of the computer ballots cast in said race into the optical scan voting equipment provided that the  
30 candidate shall trail the winning candidate by less than the following number of votes:

31 (a) In those races where the number of votes cast is less than or equal to five thousand  
32 (5,000) the candidate requesting the recount shall trail the winning candidate by two percent (2%)  
33 or fifty (50) votes, whichever is less; in those races where the number of votes cast is between  
34 five thousand one (5,001) and twenty thousand (20,000) the candidate requesting the recount

1 shall trail the winning candidate by one percent (1%) or one hundred (100) votes, whichever is  
2 less; and in those races where more than twenty thousand (20,000) votes are cast the candidate  
3 requesting the recount shall trail the winning candidate by one-half of one percent (1/2%) or one  
4 hundred fifty (150) votes, whichever is less.

5 (b) For the purpose of determining recount eligibility, as prescribed in subsections (2)(a)  
6 and (3) of this section, the total number of votes cast in a race shall be determined by dividing the  
7 total number of votes eligible to be cast in the race by the number of candidates for whom each  
8 voter was eligible to cast votes.

9 (3) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsections (1)(a) and (2)(a) of this section, a  
10 candidate who trails the winning candidate by five percent (5%) or less, but more than the  
11 minimum percentage or number of votes as required in subsections (1)(a) or (2)(a) of this section,  
12 as applicable, may petition the state board to conduct a recount of the votes cast at each precinct  
13 by re-reading the programmed memory device or devices and comparing the results and totals  
14 obtained at such recount with the results and totals obtained on election night. If, after said  
15 recount, a candidate shall trail the winning candidate by less than the number of votes prescribed  
16 in subsection (1)(a) or (2)(a) of this section, as the case may be, the candidate may request a  
17 recount of the votes cast at each precinct to subsection (1)(a) or (2)(a) of this section, as is  
18 applicable.

19 (4) Marked ballots, including those returned by the optical scan machine as programmed  
20 in accordance with this section, shall be available for inspection and copying by any person,  
21 subject to reasonable security procedures.

22 (5) Nothing contained herein shall be construed to bar or prevent the manual recount of  
23 ballots upon request of an individual eligible to request a vote recount pursuant to this section.

24 The state board shall have the authority to adopt rules and regulations to implement and  
25 administer the provisions of this section.

26 **17-19-39.1. Voted ballot storage and security.** -- (a) Voted computer ballots that were  
27 counted at the state board shall be stored in containers by the state board until the expiration of  
28 twenty-two (22) months from the date of election and the final result of any disputed results in  
29 that election, and voted computer ballots that were voted and packaged at a local precinct or  
30 counted at the local board shall be held and stored in containers by the local board in accordance  
31 with the regulations promulgated by the state board until the expiration of twenty-two (22)  
32 months from the date of election and the final result of any disputed results in that election. The  
33 voted ballots shall remain stored in the appropriate containers, but shall be available for  
34 inspection and copying by any person, subject to reasonable security procedures ~~unless ordered to~~

1 ~~be opened by the state board or a court of law.~~ The computer file containing ballot layout  
2 information and candidate totals shall be transferred to a disk and retained permanently.

3 (b) Notwithstanding the requirements of this section, the state board shall have the  
4 authority to examine and inspect the voted ballots subsequent to the certification of an election  
5 and the final resolution of any disputed results in that election.

6 **17-19-43. Tampering with sample ballot.** -- Every person who willfully and without  
7 lawful authority destroys, secretes, removes, defaces, alters, tampers, or meddles with a sample  
8 ballot posted at the polling place, shall be guilty of a felony.

9 **17-19-49. Political literature and influence.** -- No poster, paper, circular, or other  
10 document designed or tending to aid, injure, or defeat any candidate for public office or any  
11 political party on any question submitted to the voters shall be distributed or displayed within the  
12 voting place or within fifty (50) feet of the entrance or entrances to the building in which voting is  
13 conducted at any primary or election. ~~Neither shall any election official~~ No voter other than a  
14 voter in the process of casting their own vote may display on his or her person within the voting  
15 place any political party button, badge, or other ~~device~~ election paraphernalia tending to aid,  
16 injure, or defeat the candidacy of any person for public office or any question submitted to the  
17 voters or to intimidate or influence the voters.

18 SECTION 2. Chapter 17-19 of the General Laws entitled "Conduct of Election and  
19 Voting Equipment, and Supplies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

20 **17-19-37.4. Irregularities not impairing validity of ballots.** -- (a) No ballot returned by  
21 the optical scan machine pursuant to a recount pursuant to §§17-19-37.1, 17-19-37.2, and 17-19-  
22 37.3 shall be rejected for any immaterial addition, omission, or irregularity in the preparation or  
23 execution of the computer ballot. No ballot shall be invalid by reason of mistake or omission in  
24 writing in the name of any candidate where the candidate intended by the voter is plainly  
25 identifiable. Where, because of any defect in marking, a ballot is held invalid as to any particular  
26 candidate for office, it shall remain valid as to the candidates for other offices. No defect in the  
27 marking of the appropriate space associated with casting a vote shall invalidate any ballot or a  
28 vote for any candidate, where the intention of the voter is clearly indicated.

29 SECTION 3. Section 17-22-5.2 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-22 entitled  
30 "Tabulation and Certification of Returns by State Board" is hereby amended to read as follows:

31 **17-22-5.2. Certificates of local elections -- Statement to secretary of state.** -- The local  
32 board shall immediately, after the result has been ascertained, furnish to the secretary of state a  
33 statement of the number of votes cast in the city or town for each candidate, the total number of  
34 votes cast in the city or town for and against any proposed amendment to a charter or question,

1 and the names of the respective candidates elected and the offices to which they have been  
2 respectively elected.

3 [Nothing contained herein shall be construed to affect the certification provisions](#)  
4 [established by §17-19-36.](#)

5 SECTION 4. Section 17-18-11 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-18 entitled "Elective  
6 Meetings" is hereby amended to read as follows:

7 **17-18-11. Time of closing of polls. --** Elective meetings in all cities and towns shall be  
8 continuously kept open for voting until 8 p.m.; provided, that any qualified voter who is waiting  
9 in line to vote [at the polling location](#) at 8 p.m. shall be entitled to cast his or her vote. When all  
10 persons entitled to vote have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to do so, the polls shall be  
11 closed.

12 SECTION 5. Section 42-35-18 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-35 entitled  
13 "Administrative Procedures" is hereby amended to read as follows:

14 **42-35-18. Effective date of chapter -- Scope of application and exemptions. --** (a) This  
15 chapter shall take effect upon January 1, 1964, and thereupon all acts and parts of acts  
16 inconsistent herewith shall stand repealed; provided, however, that except as to proceedings  
17 pending on June 30, 1963, this chapter shall [not](#) apply to all agencies and agency proceedings not  
18 expressly exempted.

19 (b) ~~None of the~~ [The](#) provisions of this chapter shall apply to the following sections and  
20 chapters:

- 21 (1) Section 16-32-10 (University of Rhode Island);
- 22 (2) Chapter 41 of title 16 (New England Higher Education Compact);
- 23 (3) Section 16-33-6 (Rhode Island College);
- 24 (4) Chapter 16 of title 23 (Health Facilities Construction Act);
- 25 (5) Chapter 8 of title 20 (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact);
- 26 (6) Chapter 38 of title 28 (Dr. John E. Donley Rehabilitation Center);
- 27 (7) ~~Chapter 7 of title 17 (State Board of Elections);~~
- 28 (8) Chapter 16 of title 8 (Judicial Tenure and Discipline);
- 29 (9) Chapter 61 of title 42 (State Lottery);
- 30 (10) Chapter 24.4 of title 45 (Special Development Districts);
- 31 (11) Chapter 12 of title 35 (The University of Rhode Island Research Corporation).

32 (c) The provisions of §§ 42-35-9, 42-35-10, 42-35-11, 42-35-12 and 42-35-13 shall not  
33 apply to:

- 34 (1) Any and all acts, decisions, findings, or determinations by the board of review of the

1 department of labor and training or the director of the department of labor and training or his, her,  
2 its or their duly authorized agents and to any and all procedures or hearings before and by the  
3 director or board of review of the department of labor and training or his or her agents under the  
4 provisions of chapters 39 -- 44 of title 28.

5 (2) Section 28-5-17 (Conciliation of charges of unlawful practices).

6 (3) Chapter 8 of title 13 (Parole).

7 (4) Any and all acts, decisions, findings or determinations by the administrator of the  
8 division of motor vehicles or his or her duly authorized agent and to any and all procedures or  
9 hearings before and by said administrator or his or her said agent under the provisions of chapters  
10 10, 11, 31 to 33, inclusive, of title 31.

11 (5) Procedures of the board of examiners of hoisting engineers under chapter 26 of title  
12 28.

13 (6) Any and all acts, decisions, findings, or determinations made under authority from  
14 the provisions of chapters 29 -- 38 of title 28, concerning workers' compensation administration,  
15 procedure and benefits.

16 (d) This chapter shall not apply to the state board of elections, except with respect to the  
17 rule-making procedures set forth in the provisions of §§42-35-2, 42-35-2.1, 42-35-2.2, 42-35-2.3,  
18 42-35-2.4, 42-35-2.5, 42-35-3, 42-35-3.1, 42-35-3.2, 42-35-3.4, 42-35-4, 42-35-4.1, 42-35-4.2,  
19 42-35-5, 42-35-5.1, and 42-35-6.

20 SECTION 6. Chapter 17-19 of the General Laws entitled "Conduct of Election and  
21 Voting Equipment, and Supplies" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

22 **17-19-37.4. Risk-limiting audit pilot program. --** (a) The board of elections shall  
23 establish a risk-limiting audit pilot program in five (5) or more cities and towns to improve the  
24 accuracy of, and public confidence in, election results. The board is encouraged to include urban  
25 and rural cities and towns.

26 (b) The pilot program shall be conducted as follows:

27 (1) For the year 2016, each city or town that participates in the pilot program shall  
28 conduct a risk-limiting audit of one or more contests after each election in that jurisdiction.

29 (2) A local canvassing authority conducting an audit pursuant to this section shall do all  
30 of the following:

31 (i) Provide at least a five (5) day public notice of the time and place of the random  
32 selection of the audit units to be manually tallied and of the time and place of the audit;

33 (ii) Make available to the public a report of the optical scan voting system results for the  
34 contest, including the results for each audit unit in the contest, prior to the random selection of

1 audit units to be manually tallied and prior to the commencement of the audit:

2 (iii) Conduct the audit upon tabulation of the town and city election results as provided in  
3 §17-19-36 and complete the audit within seven (7) days after the election; and

4 (iv) Conduct the audit in public view by hand.

5 (3) On or before April 1, 2017, the state board of elections shall report to the general  
6 assembly on the effectiveness and efficiency of risk-limiting audits conducted pursuant to this  
7 section. The report shall include an analysis of the efficiency of risk-limiting audits, including the  
8 costs of performing the audits.

9 (4) An audit shall not be conducted pursuant to this section with respect to a state or  
10 multijurisdictional contest unless all of the cities and towns involved in the contest choose to  
11 participate in the pilot program authorized by this section.

12 (c) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

13 (1) "Audit unit" means a precinct, a set of ballots, or a single ballot. A precinct, a set of  
14 ballots, or a single ballot may be used as an audit unit for purposes of this section only if all of the  
15 following conditions are satisfied:

16 (i) The relevant optical scan tabulating device is able to produce a report of the votes cast  
17 in the precinct, set of ballots, or single ballot.

18 (ii) The elections official is able to match the report described in subsection (c)(1)(i) of  
19 this section with the ballots corresponding to the report for purposes of conducting an audit  
20 pursuant to this section.

21 (iii) Each ballot is assigned to not more than one audit unit.

22 (2) "Contest" means an election for an office or upon a ballot question.

23 (3) "Risk-limiting audit" means a manual tally of cast ballots employing a statistical  
24 method that ensures a large, predetermined minimum chance of requiring a full manual tally  
25 whenever a full manual tally would show an electoral outcome that differs from the outcome  
26 reported by the vote tabulating device for the audited contest. A risk-limiting audit shall begin  
27 with a hand tally of the votes in one or more audit units and shall continue to hand tally votes in  
28 additional audit units until there is strong statistical evidence that the electoral outcome is correct.  
29 In the event that counting additional audit units does not provide strong statistical evidence that  
30 the electoral outcome is correct, the audit shall continue until there has been a full manual tally to  
31 determine the correct electoral outcome of the audited contest.

32 SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
A N A C T  
RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

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1           This act would make extensive changes to the elections laws, including the definition of  
2 what a vote is and how to store ballots in cases of disputed results, and would allow a voter to  
3 take into or use election paraphernalia in a polling place. It would also make the board of  
4 elections subject to the rulemaking provisions of the administrative procedures act. This act  
5 would also direct the state board of elections to establish a risk-limiting audit pilot program and to  
6 report to the general assembly on the effectiveness of such audits.

7           This act would take effect upon passage.

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