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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES

Introduced By: Senators Dimitri, Patalano, LaMountain, and Thompson

Date Introduced: March 14, 2025

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 17-8-10 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-8 entitled "Local
2 Canvassing Authorities" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **17-8-10. Publication of local questions to be submitted to voters.**

4 (a) Prior to each local election at which public questions are to be submitted, the local board
5 shall cause to be prominently posted in at least three (3) local public locations and advertised at
6 least once in a newspaper of local circulation, ~~or in lieu of the requirement to place the~~
7 ~~advertisement in a newspaper of local circulation, the City of Pawtucket may mail to the household~~
8 ~~of each registered voter prior to the election~~ the full text of each legislative act to be acted upon and
9 the election date, or the local board may substitute a description of the text of each act in lieu of the
10 full text, together with the following information:

- 11 (1) The designated number of the question;
12 (2) A brief caption of the question;
13 (3) A brief explanation of the measure that is the subject matter of the question; and
14 (4) A notice that voter fraud is a felony and the penalty for voter fraud. This notice shall be
15 in conspicuous lettering and shall contain the following language: "You must be registered to vote
16 from your actual place of residence."

17 (b) If the public question involves the issuance of bonds or other evidence of indebtedness
18 or any other long-term financial obligation such as a lease, the notice required by subsection (a) of
19 this section shall also include at least the following information to be provided:

1 (1) The estimated total cost of the project or program, including financing (using a
2 reasonable assumed rate of interest), legal, and other costs.

3 (2) The estimated useful life of the project, and the term of the bonds, other indebtedness,
4 or other obligation.

5 (3) A reasonably detailed description of the project or program, its purposes, and a project
6 timetable.

7 (c) The local board may substitute the advertising requirements as listed in subsection (a)
8 of this section, by posting in its place, a conspicuous and prominent notice containing all of the
9 same information on the municipality's website for at least twenty-one (21) consecutive days
10 leading up to and including the date of the election, where the local question(s) are certified to
11 appear on the ballot, in addition to prominently posting the same in at least three (3) public
12 locations.

13 SECTION 2. Chapter 17-8 of the General Laws entitled "Local Canvassing Authorities" is
14 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

15 **17-8-11. Publication of early voting dates, hours, and location.**

16 (a) The local board shall advertise the dates, hours, and location of early voting, in a
17 newspaper of general circulation in the city or town at least once prior to the commencement of
18 any in-person early voting period to be conducted by the local board, and at least one while that
19 same early voting period is underway.

20 (b) The local board shall publish a conspicuous and prominent notice on the municipality's
21 website of the dates, hours, and location of early voting, and said notice shall remain published
22 throughout the duration of any in-person early voting period conducted by the local board. Said
23 notice shall reasonably comply with web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 compliance
24 level AA.

25 SECTION 3. Section 17-9.1-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1 entitled "Registration
26 of Voters" is hereby amended to read as follows:

27 **17-9.1-3. Periods when boards receive registrations.**

28 (a) The local boards shall open their respective offices for the purposes of receiving
29 registration of voters throughout the year during the regular business hours. Registration for any
30 election shall close on the thirtieth (30th) day preceding an election; provided, that local boards
31 shall not receive the registration on Sundays or legal holidays, and may receive the registrations
32 during additional hours each day from the fortieth (40th) to the thirtieth (30th) day before any
33 election. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as restricting the right of statewide or
34 local registration agents or members of the general assembly to accept registrations of voters on

1 any day. The acceptance of registrations at any other time shall not affect the validity of any
2 election.

3 (b) Notwithstanding any other sections of the general laws to the contrary, all local boards
4 of canvassers shall remain open from eight-thirty (8:30) a.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m. on the
5 last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter registrations to permit participation of the voters
6 in the next succeeding election. In the event that the last day prescribed by law for the taking of
7 voter registrations is a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, then the local board may;

8 (1) Designate one publicly accessible location in the city or town at which voter
9 registrations will be taken; and

10 (2) Designate the hours during which voter registration will be taken at that location, which
11 hours shall include the hours from one o'clock (1:00) p.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m.

12 (c) If a local board does designate a location other than its regular place of business or does
13 designate hours other than eight-thirty o'clock (8:30) a.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m., it shall:

14 (1) Publicly announce those designation(s) at least ten (10) days prior to the last day
15 provided by law for the taking of voter registrations; and

16 (2) Advertise those designation(s) in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town
17 at least twice prior to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter registrations. [The local](#)
18 [board may substitute advertising in a newspaper, by posting a conspicuous and prominent notice](#)
19 [of those designation\(s\) on the municipality's website, for at least ten \(10\) consecutive days leading](#)
20 [up to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter registrations. Said notice shall reasonably](#)
21 [comply with web content accessibility guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 compliance level AA.](#)

22 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
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- 1 This act would require the local board of canvassers to publish early voting dates, hours,
2 and location, at least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or town, and to
3 publish the same on the municipality's website for the duration of the in-person early voting period.
4 It would also permit the substitution of advertising the voter registration deadline in a newspaper
5 by continuously posting notice of designation(s) on the municipality's website for a designated
6 period of consecutive days leading up to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter
7 registrations.
8 This act would take effect upon passage.

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