

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- SECRETARY OF STATE

Introduced By: Senator Cynthia Armour Coyne

Date Introduced: March 24, 2022

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

(Secretary of State)

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Section 17-6-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-6 entitled "Secretary of  
2 State" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3           **17-6-1. General powers and duties.**

4           (a) The secretary of state shall have those functions, powers, and duties relating to elections  
5 that may be provided by this title or any other law not inconsistent with this chapter. The secretary  
6 of state shall maintain a central roster of all elected and appointed officers of the state, including  
7 for each officer the nature of the officer's tenure and the date of expiration of the officer's term of  
8 office. The secretary of state shall maintain a central register of all persons registered to vote in the  
9 several cities and towns and shall add, amend, delete, and cancel any names appearing on the  
10 register as certified to the secretary by the several local boards and by the state board.

11           (b) The secretary of state may compile and publish a complete edition of the election law  
12 that the secretary shall make available to all election officials and candidates upon request and  
13 without charge. The secretary of state shall receive and file certificates of election results as  
14 provided by this title.

15           (c) Notwithstanding any provisions of the general laws to the contrary, the office of the  
16 secretary of state shall have the authority to submit and approve the specifications used by the  
17 department of administration in procuring voting systems, voting system-related services, and  
18 accessible voting equipment on behalf of the state.

19           (d) The secretary of state, with the assistance of the board of elections shall conduct a

1 cybersecurity assessment of election systems and facilities. The cybersecurity assessment shall  
2 include an assessment of the voter registration system, voting equipment, mechanisms to transmit  
3 election results, electronic poll books, and security of facilities.

4 SECTION 2. Chapter 17-6 of the General Laws entitled "Secretary of State" is hereby  
5 amended by adding thereto the following sections:

6 **17-6-1.4. Election systems cybersecurity review board.**

7 (a) The secretary of state shall establish an election systems cybersecurity review board.  
8 The review board shall be comprised of the secretary of state, or designee, the executive director  
9 of the board of elections, or designee, the executive director of the Rhode Island League of Cities  
10 and Towns, or designee, a representative from the Rhode Island national guard, a representative  
11 from the Rhode Island state police, and a representative from the Rhode Island division of  
12 information technology.

13 (b) The secretary of state, or designee, shall serve as chairperson of the review board.

14 (c) It shall be the duty of the election systems cybersecurity review board to review the  
15 assessments conducted by the board of elections and department of state and also to procure a third-  
16 party assessment of the election systems. The review board will provide a security analysis of the  
17 election systems and election facilities and shall issue a report based on its assessment with any  
18 recommendations to improve the cybersecurity of the election systems and election facilities.

19 (d) The secretary of state shall adopt rules defining classes of protected election data and  
20 establish best practices for identifying and reducing risk to the electronic use, storage, and  
21 transmission of election data and the security of election systems.

22 (e) The cybersecurity review board shall issue a report no later than two (2) months prior  
23 to a statewide primary election referenced in § 17-15-1.

24 **17-6-14. Cybersecurity training for local boards of canvassers.**

25 The secretary of state shall offer training annually regarding cybersecurity best practices  
26 to local boards of canvassers.

27 SECTION 3. Chapter 42-7 of the General Laws entitled "Executive Department" is hereby  
28 amended by adding thereto the following section:

29 **42-7-9. Cybersecurity incident response group.**

30 (a) The governor shall establish a cybersecurity incident response group, which shall  
31 include the superintendent of the Rhode Island state police, or designee, the adjutant general of the  
32 Rhode Island national guard, or designee, the director of the Rhode Island division of information  
33 technology, or designee, the director of the Rhode Island emergency management agency, or  
34 designee, executive director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, or designee and the

1 secretary of state, or designee.

2 (b) The cybersecurity incident response group shall:

3 (1) Establish communication protocols in the event of a breach of cybersecurity in any  
4 agency or public body. The protocols shall include, but not be limited to:

5 (i) A list of potential cybersecurity breaches that would require reporting;

6 (ii) State and local entities covered within the communication plan;

7 (iii) Mechanisms to communicate a cybersecurity breach in a timely manner to members  
8 of the public and other relevant parties who may be affected by the breach; and

9 (iv) Primary contact at each agency or public body.

10 (c) The cybersecurity incident response group shall also establish long-term policy  
11 planning and goals for the state and municipalities regarding evolving cybersecurity threats and  
12 how to address them in a coordinated manner.

13 (d) The cybersecurity incident response group shall be subject to chapter 46 of title 42,  
14 ("open meetings"), and chapter 2 of title 38, ("access to public records").

15 SECTION 4. 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 -- SECRETARY OF STATE

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1           This act would authorize the secretary of state and board of elections to conduct an  
2 extensive cybersecurity assessment of our election systems and facilities and to establish a  
3 cybersecurity review board to review and assess our election system. It would also create a  
4 cybersecurity incident response group to adopt protocols in the event of any agency or public body  
5 breaches of cybersecurity.

6           This act would take effect upon passage.

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