



March 18, 2025

The Honorable Evan Shanley
Chair, House Committee on State Government and Elections
Rhode Island State House, 82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Re: In Support of HJR-5515– Resolution for Same Day Voter Registration

Dear Chair Shanley and the Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI), our member agencies and the low- income Rhode Islanders we serve, I write in **strong support for House Resolution 5515 (Same-Day Voter Registration)** which will put a question on the ballot asking Rhode Island voters to amend the state constitution, enabling the General Assembly to change the voter registration deadline up to the day of an election.

The mission of HNRI is to increase the supply of safe, healthy, affordable homes in thriving communities. Our mission is realized through coalition-building, policy advocacy work, and core communications. Some of the initiatives that we lead are Homes RI, which is a coalition of more than 80 organizations who support the mission to increase affordable housing supply and access, and *Our Homes, Our Votes*, an initiative focused on civic engagement among low and moderate income renters.

Where we live is undeniably connected to our ability to fully participate in civic life. For people who face housing insecurity, the ability to remain an active voter is complicated by shifts in residences and housing status. Research conducted by Princeton University showed a correlation between eviction rates and voter turnout in past elections. As Rhode Island works to turn the tide and meet more of our constituents' housing needs, we should be doing the same thing to expand voter access, so that no eligible Rhode Islander is left behind or disenfranchised by circumstances that are frequently beyond their control. Same-day voter registration is an effective policy tool to achieve this, and we already have the infrastructure to implement it more fully. In the 2024 election, more than 9,000 voters utilized same-day registration for the Presidential and Vice Presidential election. Imagine if these voters could also make their voice heard at the state and local level, and for important ballot initiatives that shape our state's future.

Rhode Island is doing many things right when it comes to elections. Like our housing system, we have an opportunity to look at the evidence and choose to improve our election system even further. **I strongly urge the Committee to vote in favor of advancing this resolution** and enable same-day registration to be put forward for consideration to the people of Rhode Island.

We are grateful to the sponsors of this resolution for their leadership on this issue and appreciate the Committee's consideration and attention to this opportunity to expand voting access. Rhode Islanders are undeniably facing a housing crisis, but they do not need to face additional voting barriers.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melina Lodge".

Melina Lodge Executive Director
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