

2024 -- H 7222

LC003919

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO ELECTIONS -- LOCAL CANVASSING AUTHORITIES -- REGISTRATION  
OF VOTERS

Introduced By: Representatives Baginski, and J. Brien

Date Introduced: January 18, 2024

Referred To: House State Government & Elections

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

1 this section shall also include at least the following information to be provided:

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

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

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

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

13 SECTION 2. Section 17-9.1-3 of the General Laws in Chapter 17-9.1 entitled "Registration  
14 of Voters" is hereby amended to read as follows:

15 **17-9.1-3. Periods when boards receive registrations.**

16 (a) The local boards shall open their respective offices for the purposes of receiving  
17 registration of voters throughout the year during the regular business hours. Registration for any  
18 election shall close on the thirtieth (30th) day preceding an election; provided, that local boards  
19 shall not receive the registration on Sundays or legal holidays, and may receive the registrations  
20 during additional hours each day from the fortieth (40th) to the thirtieth (30th) day before any  
21 election. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as restricting the right of statewide or  
22 local registration agents or members of the general assembly to accept registrations of voters on  
23 any day. The acceptance of registrations at any other time shall not affect the validity of any  
24 election.

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

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

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

34 (c) If a local board does designate a location other than its regular place of business or does

1 designate hours other than eight-thirty o'clock (8:30) a.m. until four o'clock (4:00) p.m., it shall:

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

4 (2) Advertise those designation(s) in a newspaper of general circulation in the city or town  
5 at least twice prior to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter registrations. The local  
6 board may substitute advertising in a newspaper by posting a conspicuous and prominent notice of  
7 those designation(s) on the municipality's website for at least ten (10) consecutive days leading up  
8 to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter registrations.

9 SECTION 3. Chapter 17-8 of the General Laws entitled "Local Canvassing Authorities" is  
10 hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

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

12 (a) The local board shall advertise the dates, hours, and location of early voting in a  
13 newspaper of general circulation in the city or town at least twice prior to the commencement of  
14 any in-person early voting period to be conducted by the local board.

15 (b) The local board shall publish a conspicuous and prominent notice on the municipality's  
16 website of the dates, hours, and location of early voting, and said notice shall remain published  
17 throughout the duration of any in-person early voting period conducted by the local board.

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

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF  
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1           This act would permit the substitution of advertising the voter registration deadline in a  
2 newspaper by posting notice of designation(s) on the municipality's website, continuously, for at  
3 least ten (10) consecutive days leading up to the last day prescribed by law for the taking of voter  
4 registrations and would require the local board to publish early voting dates, hours, and location at  
5 least twice in a newspaper of general circulation within the city or town, and to publish the same  
6 on the municipality's website for the duration of the in-person early voting period, and would also  
7 permit the substitution of advertising in a newspaper and public posting of local ballot questions  
8 by posting notice on the municipality's website, continuously, for at least twenty-one (21)  
9 consecutive days leading up to and including the date of the election.

10           This act would take effect upon passage.

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