



SAME DAY REGISTRATION FOR RHODE ISLAND*

H5983* Representative Katherine Kazarian

S569 Senator Alana DiMario

A constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly to enact Same Day Registration.

Rhode Island has the earliest voter registration deadline in the United States. The 30-day requirement is a relic of an age of paper voter registrations and is mandated by our state constitution.

H 5983 would put a question on the ballot in 2022 eliminating the 30-day requirement in our constitution, which if passed, would allow the General Assembly to establish Same Day Registration in Rhode Island.

Same Day Voter registration is a proven reform that increases voter turnout an average of five percent. As of 2020, 21 states and the District of Columbia offer same day registration for eligible voters, including 2/3rds of New England states (Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire and Connecticut). Unfortunately, Rhode Island is not one of them.

Rhode Island currently allows eligible residents to register to vote on Election Day, for presidential races only. Expanding this option to state and local races—the elections that have the most direct impact on Rhode Island's communities—wouldn't require creating a whole new system, but merely expanding an existing one.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- Eligible voters should not be penalized for missing an arbitrary deadline—which is exactly what the current deadline of 30 days before Election Day is.
- Same day registration is a mark of a modern election. Just as Rhode Island has updated other aspects of our voting system—through automatic voter registration, online voter registration, expanded absentee voting and other modernization measures—we should do away with the outdated deadline system and allow same-day registration for eligible voters.
- Same day registration accommodates hard-working Rhode Islanders who do not have time to register beforehand. Same day registration meets them halfway and ensures that they are not punished at the ballot box for all their hard work.
- Not all Rhode Islanders count down the days until every election—even fewer are constantly checking the Rhode Island Board of Elections' website to keep track of the dizzying litany of arbitrary deadlines. Forcing Rhode Islanders to plan weeks in advance is an unnecessary deterrent for eligible, hard-working Rhode Islanders who want to have a voice in our elections.



*Bill pending amendment