



Town of Richmond, Rhode Island
RESOLUTION #2026-3

Richmond Town Council Resolution Requesting the General Assembly Consider Swift Action to Change the date of the September 2026 Rhode Island Statewide Primary Election Due To Concerns Regarding the Labor Day Holiday

WHEREAS, under current state law, the 2026 Rhode Island Statewide Primary Election is scheduled to be held on September 8, 2026, which is the day immediately following Labor Day, a major state and federal holiday; and

WHEREAS, in the Town of Richmond, the polling location will need to be set up and prepared by Town and Election Staff, adding significantly to the Town's election costs and creating logistical complications due to the unavailability of sufficient personnel on a holiday weekend; and

WHEREAS, these costs and logistical problems will be exacerbated on a statewide basis across all 39 cities and towns, including over 400 polling locations, possibly costing an additional \$200,000 for municipalities, which has caused town clerks and election officials and the full Rhode Island Towns and City Clerk's Association, to request a legislative change to mitigate these issues; and

WHEREAS, the deadline for early voting to end, as well as the emergency mail ballot application deadline, which are typically at 4:00 P.M. on the day prior to every election, will, due to an irreconcilable conflict in the state's uniform deadlines statute, instead fall on the day of the primary itself. This has resulted in serious concerns from Rhode Island's local election officials regarding their logistical capability to administer both the early voting process and simultaneously operate regular polling locations, many of which are located in the same physical spaces as early voting sites, including Richmond's Town Hall, which may confuse voters and severely complicate the efficient conduct of the September Primary; and

WHEREAS, because early voting will take place on the same day as the Primary, all 39 cities and towns, including Richmond, will need to recruit, hire, train and pay additional poll workers in order to conduct both legally mandated processes simultaneously; and

WHEREAS, because of these and other serious concerns, the Richmond Board of Canvassers voted unanimously on May 15, 2025, to officially support legislation to change the Primary Election to Wednesday after Labor Day, which would mitigate these serious costs, logistical, operational and staffing concerns; and

WHEREAS, the state Board of Elections, in response to concerns received from multiple municipalities, including Richmond, voted unanimously on January 13, 2026, to support the request to the General Assembly to consider legislation changing the date of the 2026 Statewide Primary Election to Wednesday, September 9, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore, the state's Chief Elections Official under the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA), is on record as supporting a change in the date of the 2026 Statewide Primary Election to Wednesday September 9, 2026, provided such a change is enacted by the General Assembly early enough in the legislative session in order to provide adequate time for effective voter and candidate communications; and

WHEREAS, both Rhode Island Town and City Clerk's Association and Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns are each on record in supporting a change in the date of the September Primary due to the Labor Day issue when this matter has been debated in past legislative sessions; and

WHEREAS, existing state law already provides for primaries to be held on Wednesdays due to religious holidays, which last occurred in September 2018, a statewide primary that was held on a Wednesday successfully, with no noted detrimental impact for voters; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island and Massachusetts have among the latest primaries in the United States, however, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted a bill in September 2025 changing the date of their primary, in part due to the same Labor Day concerns, stating it was "necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience" and for the "orderly administration" of the election.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Richmond Town Council urges immediate consideration and passage of legislation anticipated to be introduced to address the date of the 2026 Statewide Primary Election, and future years' primaries where the election would fall on the day following Labor Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Richmond Town Council urges immediate consideration and passage of legislation anticipated to be introduced to address the date of the 2026 Statewide Primary Election, and future years primaries where the election would fall on the day following Labor Day; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Richmond Town Council respectfully requests the General Assembly consider and enact this date change in Title 17 of the Rhode Island General Laws, and that all Richmond Representatives and Senators work diligently to support passage of this change; and

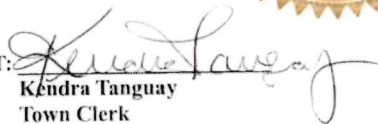
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk forward a copy of this Resolution to the Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Senate President, the Hon. Majority and Minority Leaders of the House and Senate, the Hon. Chairperson of the House State Government and Elections Committee, the Hon. Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, and to all Hon. Representatives and Senators who represent the Town of Richmond.

A motion was made by President Wilcox, seconded by Councilor Dinsmore to approve Resolution 2023-3 in Support of Senate Bill No. 2147, which would move the 2026 Statewide Primary to Wednesday due to Labor Day. Vote: Councilor Dinsmore, Aye; Councilor Madnick, Aye; President Wilcox, Aye.

GIVEN UNDER THE SEAL OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RICHMOND
THIS 3rd DAY OF MARCH 2026.




Samantha Wilcox
Richmond Town Council President

ATTEST: 
Kendra Tanguay
Town Clerk