

Know Your Rights

The right to vote is one of the most important rights we have as American citizens and Rhode Islanders. If you are a citizen and at least 18 years of age, you have the right to vote in the upcoming **March 2 Special Election**. Every vote counts in our democracy and the Attorney General's Office and the Secretary of State's Office are committed to protecting your right to vote.

We created this guide to help you understand your rights as a voter and where to go for help between now and Election Day.

You have the right to vote without pressure or intimidation

It is illegal under Rhode Island law to intimidate voters either inside or outside of polling places, or near ballot drop boxes. Intimidating behavior can include words or actions. It is also illegal for anyone to block or attempt to block, by any means, the entrance to a polling place or ballot drop box. Intimidating behavior should be reported immediately using the [Attorney General's online complaint form](#) or by calling the Secretary of State's Voter Information Hotline at 401-222.2340.

If you witness what you believe to be election-related misconduct, email the Attorney General's Office at voting@riag.ri.gov.

We are committed to protecting your right to vote and participate in our democratic process.



RI Department of State
Nellie M. Gorbea
Secretary of State

You have the right to vote in person before Election Day

In the 20 days leading up to Election Day—February 10 through March 1—you can vote in person at your city or town hall for any reason during their regular business hours. Early in-person voting is similar to voting at a polling place and may be a good option for you if you are unable to vote at your usual polling place on Election Day or if you have run out of time to request a mail ballot. No excuse is required to vote early in person.

You have the right to vote in person at your designated polling place on Election Day—even as Rhode Island continues to limit public gatherings and promote social distancing to stop the spread of COVID-19

You can still vote in person at your designated polling place. Many polling places have changed. You can check your polling place by visiting the [Secretary of State's Voter Information Center](#).

You have the right to vote by mail by completing a mail ballot application

All voters can vote by mail. In filling out a mail ballot application, it's enough for you to say that you may not be able to vote at your designated polling place on Election Day. No other reason is required. You should send your mail ballot application by February 2 for it to be received by the 4 p.m. February 9 deadline and mail your voted mail ballot by February 23 to ensure it arrives by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Alternatively, you can drop off your mail ballot at the Board of Elections or find a [24-hour drop box location here](#). Drop boxes will also be available at all polling places on Election Day. You can track the status of your mail ballot using [the Secretary of State's tracking system](#).

You have the right to submit your mail ballot without the signature of witnesses or a notary

In previous elections, voters submitting a mail ballot were required to have the mail ballot envelope signed by two witnesses or a notary. In light of COVID-19, there are no witness or notary requirements to vote a mail ballot in this Special Election.

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You have the right to bring one of many different photo IDs to identify yourself at your polling place

Rhode Island law requires voters to provide photo identification at their polling place. You can bring any one of the following documents with a photo, as long as they are not more than six months expired: 1) Rhode Island driver's license/permit, 2) Rhode Island voter ID card, 3) U.S. Passport, 4) ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government, 5) ID card issued by a U.S. educational institution, 6) U.S. military ID card, 7) ID card issued by U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.), 8) government-issued medical card.

You have the right to request a provisional ballot if you are a registered voter and your name is not on the voter list at your designated polling place, or if you don't have an acceptable photo ID

If you are a registered voter, you have the right to vote at the polls on Election Day, even if your name cannot be found on the voter list when you arrive at your designated polling place. You can request a provisional ballot, which will be counted once your local board of canvassers confirms your eligibility. You may also vote a provisional ballot if you do not have an acceptable form of photo identification.

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You have the right to vote as soon as you are released from prison and you may also vote while you have been charged with a crime, are awaiting trial, sentencing, or incarceration

For those Rhode Islanders who were unable to vote while imprisoned for a felony conviction, Rhode Island law restores your right to vote as soon as you leave prison. If you are sentenced to home confinement, probation, or parole, you are eligible to vote as are those Rhode Islanders that have been charged with a crime and are awaiting trial, sentencing, or incarceration.

You have the right to bring someone with you to the polls

You can bring someone to your polling place to help you vote if you require assistance. This person will be able to go to the voting booth with you to help you vote. Children under 18 can also accompany you.

You have the right to fix your mail ballot or mail ballot application if it is rejected

If your mail ballot or mail ballot application is rejected, you will receive a letter from your local board of canvassers or the Board of Elections that tells you how to fix the ballot or ballot application.

You have the right to accessible voting if you have a disability

On Election Day, each polling place will have at least one handicapped-accessible voting booth designated for priority use by voters over 65 years of age or who are disabled. Voters who have a medical disability that would cause the voter to experience severe discomfort by standing in line will be allowed to move to the front of the line.

Polling places will also be equipped with a sheet magnifier to assist voters who are visually impaired. Visit the [Secretary of State's site](#) for more information about accessible voting, including how to cast your ballot using AutoMark equipment.

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