



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1196  
401-222-2080

Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor

July 9, 2009

TO THE HONORABLE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 14, Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Rhode Island and Section 43-1-4 of the Rhode Island General Laws, I transmit, with my disapproval, 2009 H 5005, "An Act Relating to Elections—Registration of Voters."

In 2006, 2007, and again in 2008, the General Assembly passed identical legislation, and each time I disapproved explaining my rationale in veto messages. Let me take the time to do so again.

Rhode Island law already enables people younger than eighteen to register to vote, as long as they will be eligible by the date of the next election. To my knowledge, current law has served this State well. It creates no impediment, nor dissuades anyone eligible to participate in the political process from doing so.

Unfortunately, as is often the case when the government decides to fix what is not broken, there are unintended consequences. If this legislation were to become law the State would be forced to prematurely add thousands of names—all people ineligible to vote—to the voter rolls. This strikes me as both counter-intuitive and counter-productive, especially considering the fact that the State spent time and money to clean up voter lists and create a state-wide central voter registry.

Adding people to a voter list who are not eligible to vote defeats the purpose of having the list in the first place. Accordingly, I disapprove of this legislation and respectfully urge your support of this veto.

Sincerely,

Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor