



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

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

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

May 3, 2018

The Honorable Erin Lynch Prata
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Room 313, Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2018-S 2707 – An Act Relating to Elections – Nomination of Party and Independent Candidates; Rhode Island Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting; Criminal Offenses – Theft, Embezzlement, False Pretenses, and Misappropriations

Dear Chairwoman Lynch Prata:

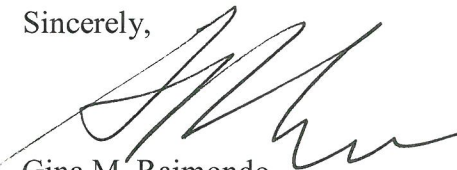
The citizens of Rhode Island deserve a government they can trust. To grow our economy, businesses need the same. Thus, I write in strong support of Senate Bill 2707, An Act Relating to Elections and Criminal Offenses, which includes a series of reforms to strengthen Rhode Island's campaign-finance system for all Rhode Island residents and businesses.

Rhode Island's elected leaders strive to employ the highest ethical standards as they work to advance the common good; however, in the past, some politicians have broken the law or have utilized their offices for personal gain. Senate Bill 2707 will help to prevent abuses like those from happening in the future.

The bill includes a mandate to randomly audit the campaign finances of candidates for political office and of political action committees. Currently, the Board of Elections limits most audits to campaigns that receive an outside complaint. This reform will ensure that misdeeds are found sooner and dealt with appropriately. In addition, this bill takes steps to disqualify candidates with outstanding fines and campaign-finance reports, gives judges the ability to forfeit campaign accounts of officials convicted of crimes relating to their political office, and increases fines for campaign-finance violations.

Rhode Island's people and its businesses have a strong ethical foundation; we need to make certain that people running for office in the State of Rhode Island follow the highest ethical standards, too. Transparency and accountability are vital to restoring people's confidence in government.

Sincerely,


Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Kristen Silvia